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THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

ACCORDING TO

The Canonical Gospels

With an Historical Essay on

The Brethren of the Lord

BY

A. DURAND, S. J.

AN AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH

EDITED BY

REV. JOSEPH BRUNEAU, S. S., D. D.

PHILADELPHIA
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1910
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February 1st, 1910.

Imprimatur:

✠ PATRITIUS JOANNES RYAN,
Archiepiscopus Philadelphiensis.

February 12th, 1910.

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PREFATORY WORDS.

WHEN the work of Père Durand, S. J., *The Childhood of Jesus Christ,* appeared in book form it was a joy to all those who had followed his learned articles in the *Revue pratique d'Apologétique,* as well as those published in the *Revue Biblique**—especially the last on *The Lord's Brethren* (January, 1908), reprinted as a fitting conclusion to the study on the Childhood of Christ.

The writer of this preface was then engaged in refuting the errors of Modernism on the Gospel, before a well-loved and never-to-be-forgotten class of eager students of Scripture at St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass. He had found so precious a help in the articles of Père Durand, that he hailed in advance the day when the little book would be translated into English. It would be such an excellent volume to read at Christmas time! And of more than passing interest would this book prove to ecclesiastical students working in the field of Biblical Science, or to teachers of Bible classes or reading circles.

Should he have had any leisure at the time, he would have gladly availed himself of the opportunity of doing good by translating the book of Père Durand.

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* 1898, pp. 74-77, 452-3; 1903, pp. 550-570; 1908, p. 1.

Frater qui adjuvatur a fratre, quasi civitas firma. Some one took the suggestion readily and did the work. His excellent translation is now offered to the public.

The tendency, or rather the tactics, of modern opponents of the Gospel is to admit readily the sincerity of the Evangelists, but to contend that a process of idealization of Christ's figure, of transformation, embellishment and, as it were, of transfiguration of the primitive tradition, took place under the influence of the faith of the Infant Church. Especially all that is supernatural in the Gospel would belong to that legendary accretion. The narratives of the childhood of Christ would therefore be foremost among such legends due to the creative imagination of a sect bound to worship its founder and to assign to him more than human origin.*

The result of this system would be that all the irradiations of Christmas night, the sublime condescension of the Son of God deigning to b made flesh and to dwell among us would be but a dream. Christianity indeed would disappear if we were justly denied the right to retain in our Creed the words which we recite on our knees, "ET INCARNATUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO EX MARIA VIRGINE: ET HOMO FACTUS EST." And this is why with a truly strategic sense those who are bound to destroy Christian Faith and overthrow the supernatural concentrate their attacks on the Gospel of the Infancy of Christ.

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* As these pages are going to press, we just receive th new edition of Father Tanquerey's Apologetics—*De Ver Religione,* 13th edit., 1909; it is very gratifying to not that his chapter on the authority of the Gospels contain (pp. 181, ff.) a strong refutation of this Modernisti theory.

The recital of these recent attacks would show how a book like this is needed. Let it suffice to allude to an article, in the *North American Review* for October, 1909, too weak and too narrow that we should do the writer the honor of mentioning his name, but which is supposed to express the attitude of many. *Christ in Modern Thought* is the title of that article, in which not even an allusion is made to the existence of Catholic Belief and Theology, but which tells us, as the last word on the question, that "the truth of the Incarnation is that humanity raised to its highest power becomes divinity!" This is called modern thought! *Evanuerunt in cogitationes suas!*

This affords us a new reason to rejoice over the fact that in *The Childhood of Jesus Christ* we have, from a Catholic pen, a scientific, penetrating and peremptory demonstration that there is not one single serious reason to reject the Gospel of the Infancy as legendary; that there is every reason to accept the first-rate historical authority of St. Luke, and that the theology of St. Paul, far from excluding and leaving no room for the Virgin-Birth of Christ, supposes and even explicitly teaches the supernatural origin of the Son of Mary, Jesus Our Lord, born in Bethlehem, in the city of David. So that we may, as safely as ever, proclaim our faith around the crib of the Divine Child: "CREDO IN JESUM CHRISTUM, FILIUM EJUS UNICUM, QUI CONCEPTUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO, NATUS EX MARIA VIRGINE."

The author and the translator have conferred a great service upon the Christian world. The book will help, for many years, to render effective and real the wish that we address to all the readers for a Happy and Blessed Christmas.

J. BRUNEAU, S. S.

ST. MARY'S SEMINARY, BALTIMORE, MD.

Feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin, 1909.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE name *Gospel of the Infancy* is now commonly given to the narratives that make up the first two chapters of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, adding moreover, for the latter, the genealogy contained in the third chapter: these narratives refer to the birth of Jesus and to His life until the time of His baptism.

The value of these documents has become the object of most special attacks. Many scholars readily look upon them as a kind of prehistoric Gospel story written according to the law set forth by Heine in the preface of his edition of Apollodorus. At the beginning of all ancient historical records we find some myths. Those professors in the chief universities of Germany are few, indeed, who have not struck out of their Creed the belief in Christ's Virgin-Birth.* How many are the ministers of the Evangelical Churches who still hold the Christmas night as a night with an historical significance? Until our own times, it is true, the Church of England had quite successfully withstood the blows of unbelieving critics, but it cannot be denied that, within the last ten years or so, the traditional views have lost ground even at Oxford and Cambridge: a fact that is, moreover, only too plainly paralleled by Protestantism in the United States also. Parsons and ministers entrusted with the care of souls among common people are influenced by the decrease of belief in the higher spheres of Universities.

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* "Two of the Gospels do, it is true, contain an introductory history (the history of Jesus' birth); but we may disregard it: for even if it contained something more trustworthy than it does actually contain, it would be as good as useless for our purpose." A. HARNACK, *What is Christianity?* p. 33.

As to the situation in the Catholic Church, she has nothing to fear for her dogma. The humblest of her children know well that under pain of the wreck of their faith, they must believe from the depth of their souls and profess with their lips, that "Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." However, in spite of the precision and of the vigor of their belief, those Catholics who read cannot but notice the noise of the fight raging around them, and they feel instinctively the need to take up the defensive. On what *historical* grounds do they hold in its integrity that Christian dogma which Liberal Protestants throw away so light-heartedly? The purpose of this little book is precisely to help them to answer that question.

Since the chief interest of the Gospel of the Infancy lies in the fact that in it Christ is set forth as born of a Virgin-Mother, it is against that belief that the efforts of a critical school, which styles itself independent—although, as a matter of fact, it has surrendered itself to old naturalistic prejudices—are especially directed. Hence we shall make the Virgin-Birth the chief object of our inquiries; the other questions are here of secondary importance, and will gather spontaneously, as it were, around this central point.

Nor must our readers forget the special difficulties met by the apologist in the Gospel of the Infancy. The latter has to deal with facts the Evangelists did not witness; even the testimonies on which they rely may not be as closely connected with these events in question, as with the rest of the Gospel record. Besides, by their very nature, these early facts were witnessed only by a few, and took place at a time when Jesus of Nazareth had not as yet become an object of public attention.

Again, this, too, must not be overlooked: in the present case, still more than in many others, attacks against the Christian belief are sure to find a ready help in the reader's ignorance and shallowness. By working upon his fondness of simple and easy solutions, by appealing to the mentality of a twentieth-century Westerner, some critics, coming forward with an objection, can easily move him. How accept the notion that Jesus was born of a Virgin?—he is asked—for admitting a wonder of that kind, undeniable proofs are necessary. But the subject in question does not allow them. Again, the earliest witnesses are unacquainted with the Virgin-Birth; nay, the Gospels set forth Jesus as the son of Joseph. Mary always a Virgin? But does not the New Testament often speak of the *fratres* of the Lord?

In vain does the apologist recall the customs and the language of the Jews of old, who called a cousin a brother, *frater,* and held a merely legal filiation just as real as natural filiation; in vain does he appeal from the cursory reading of the texts to a deeper study, that takes into account not only what they expressly affirm, but also what they imply: his explanations, well-founded as they are, do not produce in many readers a decisive and final impression. To a most *simple* difficulty the apologist gives a *complex* answer, laboriously prepared; he uses distinctions, and we all know how little the public mind is able to grasp the meaning and import of distinctions.

This, Father Lagrange remarked but a few months ago, precisely in connection with the topic on which we are engaged: "True, in order to realize these things, one must possess a refined sense of discrimination, and use it for appreciating properly ages most remote from us. For Herzog all this, no doubt, is "mere gossip."* Of a similar instance, H. Loriaux wrote recently as follows: "Well, well! here is a religion far beyond the comprehension of the common people, if, in order to believe in the Virginal Conception, one must know 'that the word *cousin* is not found in Semitic languages.' " * That is not the question. The rank and file—and the learned, too—are guided in their faith by the authority of the Church; but I think we are not unfair in demanding some smatter of ancient languages and customs, even of those who impugn the dogma of the Church in the name of scepticism. Otherwise, the "rank and file" might be led into error. Arguments like that of Herzog put on and claim the appearance of logical rigor and of simplicity and straightforwardness. To answer them we are obliged to make use of explanations, and then our opponents reply that we treat them with "subtleties," "shifts," "gossip"; they boldly appeal to evidence, "perfect clearness," "the genealogical lists," "there is but one explanation, not two." Let us repeat once more that this is simply to reckon on the shallowness of the readers. The public at large can judge only after its own *criteria;* but in our days, it knows hardly any sonship but the physiological, and therefore never dreams of putting on, as it were, the mental attitude of the men of old, the more so that it may be imposed upon by the writer's perfect self-assurance. Better-informed judges—over-exacting, of course—will think successes of that kind are too easily obtained." *

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* The word is actually uttered by G. Herzog. In his article on Christ's virginal conception, *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. religieuses,* 1907, p. 127, he styles "mere gossip" the explanations proposed by Catholic theologians regarding Mark, $3^{21, 31}$.

* *L'Autorité des Evangiles,* by H. LORIAUX, p. 53. We need not draw the reader's attention to the rather great confusion made by Loriaux, who speaks of Jesus' Virgin-Birth, when the question is about the *fratres* of the Lord.

Again, the apologist is at times expected to bring forward more than he is able and intends to do. He writes first of all for believers, in order to maintain them in their faith, by showing that the difficulty is groundless, or at least is such that it must not shake their legitimately acquired certainty.

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* *Revue Biblique,* 1907, p. 448.

As to unbelievers, if they reject altogether the historical value of the *Gospel of the Infancy,* because miracles are related therein, the only apologetical method that can be used with them is merely to refer them to the fundamental problem of the supernatural, its possibility and its presence in the world. To dismiss *a priori* the existence of Angels, is to bind oneself beforehand to hold as legendary the narratives that tell us of their appearing to Zachary, Mary and the shepherds of Bethlehem.

On the other hand, the solution of the fundamental problem regarding the divine character of Christianity does not necessarily rest on the truth of the *Gospel of the Infancy;* whether Jesus was born of a Virgin or not, adored by the Magi or not, carried into Egypt and thus taken away from Herod, or not. These are so many questions outside the scope of the treatise on *Revealed Religion:* in that treatise, the theologian's only object is to prove, by solid arguments, that Christ came in the name of God, to teach us with authority the way of salvation.

Likewise, taken as a whole, the historical authority of the Gospels can stand without a peremptory defence of the *Gospel of the Infancy.* We have just said that the merely human testimony of these first chapters does not come before us in conditions as favorable as the narrative of Jesus' public life. Even though the former were a history written beforehand, partly legendary or mythical, the latter would not necessarily, on that account, be unworthy of belief, it would follow merely that our Evangelists were no more exacting than the best profane historians. Does this imply that Christian scholars must give up altogether any critical defence of the authenticity and truthfulness of the documents that pertain to Jesus' origin and childhood? Not at all, otherwise, we would not have composed this little work. But it *does* imply that it is of real importance for the Christian scholar to state accurately, beforehand, the method and limits of that defence.

History proves satisfactorily that our belief regarding Jesus' origin and infancy continues the early Christian faith, that of the generation which witnessed the apparition of the canonical Gospels.

The orthodox Church has always looked upon Christ's virginal conception, as well as the events with which it is accompanied in the narrative of St. Matthew and St. Luke, as historical realities.

In that belief, was she right or was she wrong? Put in these words, the question admits of two answers. The first, which has a broad bearing, rests on the general proofs appealed to by Christianity in behalf of its truth. The Church of Christ comes from God, and if, by special prerogative, her faith has remained free from error, we have no right to distinguish in her Creed what is to be held and what, in the name of the so-called requirements of the modern mind, some claim should be dropped.

The second answer, more direct, although less conclusive as regards this or that point, consists in the historical justification of what is contained in our documents. The facts related therein are sufficiently guaranteed for their truth to remain unchallenged, in spite of the character of the marvelous with which most of them are stamped. The continuity of the testimonies and their connection with the facts do away with the strictly so-called mythical hypothesis; yet in spite of what we have just said, the narrative of the Infancy gives rise to a certain number of special difficulties which a merely critical exegesis cannot solve so as to bring to all minds complete satisfaction.

On the other hand, to grant the possibility of a supernatural intervention is not to bind oneself to admit as actually real all *possible* miracles, but only those of which the existence is legitimately attested; and on this ground, many questions arise even for believers, which we cannot solve merely by saying that all these texts regarding the Infancy are inspired and free from any kind of error. Even then, we must know their meaning and exact bearing: for instance, to the question as to what value the Evangelists attached to the genealogies of Jesus, the traditional interpretation has given no firm and consistent answer: this is one point—out of many—which comes within the province of historical inquiry and exegesis.

The subject has been divided as follows: (1) General Attack and Defence; (2) History of the Dogma of Jesus' Virgin-Birth; (3) Its Modern Opponents; (4) Detailed Criticism of the Gospel Texts; (5) Comparison between the Gospels and the other Parts of the New Testament; (6) Positive Credibility and Historical Value of the Canonical Texts relating to Jesus' Infancy.

This little work is more than a mere reproduction of the articles published in the *Revue pratique d'Apologétique,* from October, 1906, to July, 1907. In several places the primitive text has been done over again and completed. In order that the reader may easily follow the discussions we are about to expose, we give, first, a literal translation of the first two chapters of St. Matthew and of St. Luke, according to the critical edition of Eb. Nestle (1906).*

ORE PLACE, HASTINGS.

September 8, 1907.

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* As may be seen at p. 1, note, our English translation is that of Father Spencer. However, anything special to Father Durand's translation has been introduced into the text.—T.

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TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT.*

ST. MATTHEW.

I.

I. GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST,$^{1-16}$.

[1] The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham.†

[2] Abraham begot Isaac; Isaac begot Jacob; Jacob begot Judah and his brothers; [3] Judah begot Peres and Zerah by Tamar; Peres begot Hesron; Hesron begot Ram; [4] Ram begot Amminadab; Amminadab begot Nahshon; Nahshon begot Salmon; [5] Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab; Boaz begot Obed by Ruth; Obed begot Jesse; [6] Jesse begot David the King.

David the King begot Solomon by her *who was the wife* of Uriah; [7] Solomon begot Rehoboam; Rehoboam begot Abijah; Abijah begot

---

* The translation is given from Spencer's "The Four Gospels: New Translation, 1900."

† Βίβλος γενέσεως, *Liber generationis* may be translated by "genealogy." The appellation Ἰησοῦς χριστός is seldom used in the Gospels; outside this passage, it is found also in Mark 1^{1} and Matthew 1^{18}, 16^{21}; and even the texts vary as to the last two passages. In John 1^{17} and 17^{3}, χριστός seems to be used always as a proper name. Concerning χριστός and υἱὸς Δαυείδ as Messianic titles, cf. DALMAN, *The Words of Jesus* (English translation), p. 289-324.

Asa; [8] Asa begot Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat begot Joram; Joram begot Uzziah;* [9] Uzziah begot Jotham; Jotham begot Ahaz; Ahaz begot Hezekiah; [10] Hezekiah begot Manasseh; Manasseh begot Amon; Amon begot Josiah; [11] Josiah begot Jechoniah and his brothers at *the time of* the removal to Babylon.†

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* Between Joram and Uzziah (Ozias) three intermediaries have been omitted. According to *IV Kings,* these are Ahaziah (Ochozias), Jehoash (Joas) and Amaziah, whose names, as a matter of fact, are here introduced, in some Greek and Syriac MSS. According to *I Paralipomenon* $3^{11\text{-}12}$ (Sept.), Uzziah (Ozias) is truly the son of Joram, so that the three kings omitted would be Jehoash (Joas), Amaziah and Azariah. The discrepancy comes apparently from the fact that in the LXX Ὀζίας (B Ὀζεία) designates sometimes Ahaziah (Ochozias) and sometimes, too, Azariah (=*Uzziah,* Ozias). Confusions like this are not uncommon in the Greek transcription of Hebrew names. Cf. W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew,* 1907, p. 4.

† According to *I Paral.,* 3^{16} Jechoniah had only one brother named Zedekiah. On the other hand, Jechoniah is not the son, but the grandson of Josiah. Finally, in the actual text, this second series of the genealogy $(^{7\text{-}11})$ counts only thirteen names instead of fourteen, as should be the case, according to verse 17, unless Jechoniah be counted both in the second and in the third series; but this is abnormal and arbitrary. Hence, some have thought that because of an alteration of the primitive text, the

[12] After the removal to Babylon, Jechoniah begot Salathiel; Salathiel begot Zerubbabel; [13] Zerubbabel begot Abiud; Abiud begot Eliakim; Eliakim begot Azor; [14] Azor begot Sadok; Sadok begot Achim; Achim begot Eliud; [15] Eliud begot Eleazar; Eleazar begot Matthan; Matthan begot Jacob; [16] Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

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name of Jehoiakim (the son of Josiah) has been left out, so that we must read: *Josiah begot Jehoiakim and his brothers; Jehoiakim begot Jechoniah at the time of the removal to Babylon.* In fact, this is the reading of some comparatively recent Greek and Syriac MSS.; nor must we forget that, according to St. Irenæus, III, xxi, 9, the genealogy given by St. Matthew sets forth St. Joseph as the descendant of Jehoiakim and of Jechoniah. The confusion may have occurred the more easily that Jechoniah is called also Jehoiakim. For the defence of this sentiment, cf. TH. ZAHN, *Das Evangelium des Matthaeus,* pp. 48-56. In this hypothesis reference is made, in verse 11, to Jehoiakim and his two brothers: Jehoahaz (Joachaz) (=Shallum) and Zedekiah (=Mattaniah), who ruled successively in Judæa; history has left us nothing about a fourth son of Josiah, named Johanan. Cf. *IV Kings,* 23 [30]-24 [8]: *I Paral.,* 3 [15].

* The Syriac version of the Gospels found in 1894 on Mount Sinai reads at verse 16 as follows: "*Joseph to whom the Virgin Mary was betrothed, begot Jesus, who is called Christ.*" Between this reading and that of the

[17] So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the removal to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the removal to Babylon unto Christ fourteen generations.

2. CHRIST'S VIRGINAL CONCEPTION,[18-25].

[18] Now in this wise was Jesus Christ begotten: His mother Mary having been espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with

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Received Text, taken as two extremes, various other readings have been noticed in the MSS. Those readings may be reduced to two types:

(*a*) [Ἰακὼβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν] τὸν Ἰωσὴφ ᾧ μνηστευθεῖσα παρθένος Μαριὰμ ἐγέννησεν Ἰησοῦν represented by five MSS. of the so-called Ferrara group, 346, 788, 543, 826, 828; by the old Latin MSS. *a* g^1, *k* [*virgo* is omitted in *q*].

(*b*) *Joseph, cui desponsata virgo Maria, Maria autem genuit Jesum* represented by the old Latin MSS. *c* [*b, cui desponsata erat virgo Maria, virgo autem Maria genuit Jesum*] *d, cui desponsata virgo Maria peperit (Christum) Jesum;* and with this reading the Curetonian version agrees: *To whom was betrothed the Virgin Mary who begot Jesus.*—Cf. K. LAKE, in the *Journal of Theo. Studies,* 1899, Vol. I, p. 119; R. HARRIS, *Further Researches into the History of the Ferrara group,* 1900, p. 7.

Later on, in chapter iv, we shall discuss which of these readings may be held as primitive.

child [by the power] of the Holy Ghost.* [19] And Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to expose her to public notice, was minded to put her away privately. [20] But while he thought over the matter, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to receive Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is [the work] of the Holy Ghost. [21] And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." [22] Now all this has come to pass, that that which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled:

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* The writers of old do not agree as to whether Mary was married or betrothed, at the time of the Annunciation; modern scholars generally hold that she was only betrothed, and therefore they understand the verb συνελθεῖν, not of the conjugal relation, but of *cohabitation:* Mary had not as yet been brought to Joseph's house. Among the Jews, the young bride still remained one year with her parents, until the day she was solemnly taken to the bridegroom's house. This was the chief marriage ceremony (*Deut.,* 20[7]). However, the contract of betrothal sufficed to establish the fundamental right of the marriage-union: it made the names, *husband, wife,* legitimate, nor could it be broken but by a repudiation put down in writing, just as for a marriage-union strictly so called. Unfaithfulness on the part of the bride was punished like adultery; on the other hand, in case the bride would become the mother of a child nor her prospective husband protest, the offspring was looked upon as legitimate. *Deut.,* 22-24.

[23] "*Behold the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,*

And they shall call his name Emmanuel;"
which translated means "God with us." * [24] And Joseph rose up from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and received her as his wife. [25] And he knew her not till she brought forth a [first born] son: † and he called his name Jesus.

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* The Hebrew text of *Isaias* 7[14] reads literally: *Behold, the Virgin is with child, and beareth a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.* More intent on the meaning than on the words, the Evangelist agrees rather with the LXX who had translated like this: *Behold, the Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Emmanuel.*

† The knowledge designated by the words οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτήν is that which results from the consummation of marriage. The *Vatic.* and the *Sinait.* leave out πρωτότοκον, *primogenitum,* which is probably a gloss, borrowed from LUKE 2[7].

II.

3. THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI,[1-12].

[1] When Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judæa in the days of King Herod, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, [2] saying: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the East, and are come to worship him." [3] When King Herod heard this he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. [4] And he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people, and inquired of them where the Christ should be born. [5] They told him: "At Bethlehem in Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet:

[6] "*And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,*
Art in no wise least among the princes [or: *chief*
cities] *of Judah:*
For out of thee shall come forth a Leader,
Who shall rule my people Israel." *

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* In the Hebrew text, the prophecy of MICHEAS 5[1] reads literally: *But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, art little to be reckoned among the "thousands" of Judah.* (The cities of about one thousand citizens and, as such, ruling over the neighboring towns.) *Yet out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.* Free as

[7] Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, ascertained of them the time when the star appeared to them. [8] And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said: "Go and search out carefully concerning the child; and when you have found him, bring me word that I too may come and worship him." [9] They, having heard the King, went their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the child was. [10] When they saw the star they rejoiced with very great joy. [11] And they went into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. [12] And being warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

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the quotation may be, it expresses the main idea of the text, viz., That from Bethlehem an unparalleled leader, the King Messias, shall come to rule Israel. The prophet sets off the contrast between the honor paid to Bethlehem and its small political importance, while the Evangelist draws attention to the Messianic glory, which makes the city of David a most unique city among all the cities of Juda.

4. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT AND THE MASSACRE OF THE LITTLE CHILDREN AT BETHLEHEM,[13-18].

[13] Now when they had departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: "Rise and take the child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and live there till I tell thee; for Herod is about to seek the child to destroy him." [14] He [or: Joseph] rose, and took the child and his mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt; [15] and was there until the death of Herod: that that which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: "*Out of Egypt I called my Son.*" *

[16] Then Herod, when he saw that he had been played upon by the wise men, was exceedingly enraged, and sent and killed all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all its surroundings, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained of the wise men. [17] Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

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* Here the Evangelist quotes OSEE II [1] according to the Hebrew text, and not according to the LXX, who had translated ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετεκάλεσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ.

[18] *"A voice was heard in Ramah,*
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel [was] weeping for her children;
And she would not be comforted, because they
are not." *

5. THE RETURN FROM EGYPT TO NAZARETH,[19-23].

[19] But when Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, [20] saying: "Rise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they who sought the child's life are dead." [21] And he rose and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. [22] But having heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the country of Galilee, [23] and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that that which was

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* JEREM. 31 [15]. According to the Hebrew: *"A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel is weeping for her children and she refuseth to be comforted for her children, because they are not."* The Evangelist seems to quote by heart the translation of the LXX 38 [15]: *"A voice was heard in Ramah [a voice] of lamentations, of weeping and of groans: Rachel is weeping over her children and she refuses to be quieted, because they are not."*

spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, that he should [or: since he was to] be called a Nazarene.*

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* In His lifetime, Jesus was commonly called *the Nazarene* ὁ Ναζωραῖος, Matt. 2[23], 26[71]; Luke 18[37]; John 18[5; 7], 19[19]; or ὁ Ναζαρηνός, Mark 1[24], 14[67], 16[6]; Luke 4[34]. Evidently this adjective is used in the same meaning as the periphrase ὁ ἀπὸ Ναζαρέθ, *the one from Nazareth,* Matt. 21[11]; John 1[45]; *Acts* 10[38]. The Palestinian Christian community was first called "the sect of the Nazarenes," *Acts* 24[5]. How far this designation was ironical and contemptuous for Jesus and His disciples, St. John intimates in Nathaniel's question to Philip: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John 1[47]; cf. 7[14]. A Christ from Nazareth of Galilee! As to the Evangelist, not only he is not ashamed of his *Nazarene* Christ, he even remarks that the prophets, particularly Isaias, had foretold concerning the Messias all that this name meant on the lips of the Jews: The Christ was to appear humble, ignored and despised; now Jesus was all that: and this is why the Jews rejected Him; this is why, too, God intended He should grow and live at Nazareth, although He was born at Bethlehem. Hence, He shall be called Nazarene, and this name, even taken by itself, will express the lack of worldly prestige, which is, according to the prophets, one of the characteristics of the true Messias. Thus the words Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται are not a quotation from the Old Testament, but rather a personal thought of the Evangelist about the surname given to Jesus by the Jews, His contemporaries. Cf. Th. Zahn, *Das Evang. des Matthaeus,* pp. 112-117.

ST. LUKE.

I.

1. THE PROLOGUE: THE PURPOSE OF THE EVANGELIST,[1-4].

[1] Since many have undertaken to draw up a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, [2] according as those, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, delivered them to us; [3] it seemed good to me also, having carefully traced the course of all things from the beginning, to write *them* to you in their order, most excellent Theophilus, [4] that you might know the certainty of those things [or: teachings] in which you were instructed.

2. AN ANGEL APPEARS TO ZACHARY TO ANNOUNCE HIM THE BIRTH OF JOHN, THE PRECURSOR,[5-25].

[5] There was in the days of Herod, King of Judæa, a certain priest named Zachary, of the course of Abijah: his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. [6] They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord

without blame; [7] and they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

[8] Once, while he was officiating as priest before God in the order of his course, [9] according to the custom of the priesthood it fell to his lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. [10] And all the multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. [11] And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing at the right side of the altar of incense. [12] And Zachary was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. [13] But the angel said to him: "Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. [14] And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many will rejoice at his birth. [15] For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord; *and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink* * and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. [16] And he shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. [17] And he [himself] shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elias, *to turn*

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* These are the very words used in the Old Testament for describing an obligation of the Nazarite vow. Cf. *Lev.* 10 ^{9}; *Numb.* 6 ^{3}; *Judg.* 13 $^{4, 7, 14}$; *I Saml.* 1 ^{11}.

*the hearts of the fathers to the children,** and the unbelieving to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." [18] And Zachary said to the angel: "How shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." [19] And the angel answered and said to him: "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. [20] And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things come to pass, because thou didst not believe my words which shall be fulfilled in their time." [21] And the people were waiting for Zachary, and wondered while he tarried in the sanctuary. [22] And when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he continued making signs to them, and remained dumb. [23] And when the days of his ministration were completed, he departed to his house.

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* MALACHY 3[23, 24]: *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."* The quotation reproduces literally neither the Hebrew text, nor the LXX, but it comes nearer to the former.

[24] After these days Elizabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying: [25] "Thus has the Lord dealt with me in the days when he looked upon me to take away my reproach among men."

3. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS,[26-38].

[26] Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And [the angel] came in to her, and said: "Hail, full of grace! the Lord is with thee: [blessed art thou among women]." * [29] But she was much troubled at his [or: this] language,† and was pondering what kind of salutation this might be. [30] And the angel

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* As the Vulgate, the Received Text reads here: *Blessed art thou among women;* but excellent MSS., and some, too, among the oldest, like the *Vatic.*, and the *Sinait.*, leave out this member, which is found the same in the texts and in the versions at verse 42. At verse 28, the words, εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν, constitute a Western and Syriac reading.

† After A, the Received Text has ἰδοῦσα, which the Latins translated by *cum audisset* or *cum vidisset.*

said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. [31] And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. [32] He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, [33] and of his kingdom there shall be no end." [34] And Mary said to the angel: "How shall this be, since I know not man?" [35] And the angel answered and said to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore that [or: the holy (one)] which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God. [36] And behold, Elizabeth thy kinswoman, she, too, has conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who is called barren. [37] For *no word from God shall be void of power* (or: *nothing is impossible to God*)."* [38] And Mary said: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.

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* In a similar circumstance, Abraham had been told regarding Sara: "Is anything too wonderful for Yahweh?" **Μὴ ἀδυνατήσει παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ ῥῆμα**; LXX, *Gen.* 18[4].

4. MARY VISITS ELIZABETH; THE *Magnificat*, [39-56].

[39] In those days Mary rose and made a hasty journey into the hill-country, to a city of Judah, [40] and entered Zachary's house, and saluted Elizabeth. [41] And it came to pass, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; [42] and she raised her voice with a loud cry, and said: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. [43] And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? [44] For lo, when the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. [45] And blessed is she who believed; for there shall be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her by the Lord." * [46] And Mary said: †

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* Attempts have been made to give to the greeting of Elizabeth the rhythmical form, noticed in the other canticles of this first chapter:

Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
And whence is this to me,
That the mother of my Lord should come to me?
For lo, when the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears,
The babe leaped in my womb for joy.

"My soul magnifies the Lord;
[47] And my spirit rejoiced [or: rejoices] in God, my Savior,
[48] Because he looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid:
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

And blessed is she who believed; for the things shall be fulfilled,
Which have been spoken to her by the Lord.

† The *Magnificat* is ascribed to Elizabeth in three Latin MSS. of the prehieronymian version: *a* (verc.), *b* (veron.), *l* (rhed.); in the *De Psalmodiæ Bono*, chapter ix, xi, of St. Niceta of Remesiana. Origen, or perhaps his translator St. Jerome, knows that reading which, however, he does not adopt, *Homil. VII in Luc.* Some have endeavored, unsuccessfully however, to add to these testimonies that of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* xvii, 6, 7. Cf. *The Journal of Theological Studies,* 1906, pp. 449-453.—The authority of these witnesses cannot prevail against that of most of the MSS. (both of texts and of versions) and most of the Fathers, especially ST. IRENAEUS, *P. G.*, vii, 873 and 991 (except one MS.); ORIGEN, *P. G.*, xiii, 1819; TERTULLIAN, *P. L.*, ii, 694; ST. AMBROSE, *P. L.*, xv, 1562; ST. JEROME, *P. L.*, xxix, 611; ST. AUGUSTINE, *P. L.*, xxxiv, 1081, and elsewhere. As to the considerations drawn from internal evidences, they are still more favorable to the reading of the Received Text. Cf. P. LADEUZE, in *Revue d'Hist. Ecclés.*, 1903, p. 623; J. H. BERNARD, in *The Expositor,* 1907, p. 193.

[49] For he that is mighty did great things to me:
And holy is his name.
[50] And his mercy is from generation to generation
On those who fear him.
[51] He has shown might with his arm;
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.
[52] He has put down princes from their throne,
And has exalted the lowly.
[53] The hungry he has filled with good things,
And the rich he has sent empty away.
[54] He has received Israel his servant,
That he might remember mercy,
[55] (As he spoke to our fathers),
Toward Abraham and his seed for ever." *
[56] And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

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* This canticle which is made up of reminiscences from the Psalms and from the Prophets, recalls especially the canticle of Anna, Samuel's mother, *I Sam.* 2^{1-10}. It may be divided into three strophes: (*a*) 46b-50. Cf. *I Sam.* 2^{1}, 1^{11}; *Gen.* 30^{13}; *Deut.* 10^{21}. (*b*) 51-53. Cf. *Ps.* lxxxix, 11; *Job*, 12^{19}, 5^{11}; *I Sam.* 2^{7}. (*c*) 54-55. Cf. *Is.* 41^{8}; *Ps.* 98^{3}; *Mich.* 7^{20}; *II Sam.* 22^{51}.

5. THE BIRTH OF JOHN; THE *Benedictus*, [57-80].

[57] Now Elizabeth's time for her delivery was completed; and she brought forth a son. [58] And her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her; and they rejoiced with her. [59] And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were for calling him Zachary, after the name of his father. [60] And his mother answered: "Not so; but he shall be called John." [61] They said to her: "There is none of your kindred who is called by this name." [62] So they made signs to his father, what he would have him called; [63] and demanding a writing-tablet he [or: Zachary] wrote: "His name is John:" and they all wondered. [64] And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue [loosed], and he spoke, blessing God. [65] And fear came upon all their neighbors: and all these things were noised abroad over all the hill-country of Judæa: [66] and all who heard them laid them up in their heart, saying: "What then will this child be?" for the hand of the Lord was with him. [67] And his father Zachary was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying:

[68] Blessed be the Lord God of Israel;
For he has visited and wrought redemption for his people,
[69] And raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of his servant David
[70] (As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets who have been since the world began),
[71] Salvation from our enemies,
And from the hand of all that hate us;
[72] To show mercy to our fathers
And to remember his holy covenant;
[73] [according to] The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant us
[74] That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies
Should serve him without fear,
[75] In holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
[76] And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High
For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
[77] To give knowledge of salvation to his people
In the remission of their sins,
[78] Through the tender mercy of our God,

Whereby [as] the Dayspring from on high [he]
has visited us,*
[79] To shine upon those who sit in darkness and
in the shade of death;
To guide our feet into the way of peace." †

[80] And the child grew, and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

II.

6. THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN BETHLEHEM, 1-20.

[1] Now it fell out in those days, that a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus, [commanding] that all the world should be enrolled. [2] This was the first enrolment [or: This first enrolment was]

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* Ἐπισκέψεται in ℵB, Syr., Arm., Goth., Boh. and L (this last with the spelling ἐπεσκέψαιται): however Tischendorf and Godet prefer ἐπεσκέψατο, which is the reading followed by the Latin Vulgate.

† The *Benedictus* is naturally divided into two chief parts. The first, from verse 68 to verse 75, may be subdivided into three strophes: (*a*) 68, 69; (*b*) 70, 71; (*c*) 72-75. The second part, from verse 76 to verse 79, has only two strophes: (*a*) 76, 77; (*b*) 78, 79. Cf. A. PLUMMER, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, p. 39.

made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.* [3] All went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city; [4] and Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, [to go] into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and family of David), [5] to enroll himself with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. [6] And it came to pass, while they were there, that the days were completed for her delivery, [7] and she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swathing-bands; and she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

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* Various readings of verse 2: B, followed by 81, 131, 203, αὕτη ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο ; ℵ, αὐτὴν ἀπογραφὴν ἐγένετο ; D, followed by the Latin translation of Origen, αὕτη ἐγένετο ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη. A, C, L, R, Ξ, αὕτη ἡ ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη εγὲνετο.

By reading αὐτή with the soft accent, and understanding ἀπογραφή of the levying itself of the tax, distinct from the census, which had taken place under Herod, some have attempted to translate: "The levying of the tax *itself* (αὐτή) took place, *for the first time* (πρώτη), not before the rule of Quirinius." But that reading is rather arbitrary, and the translation is still more so. The best is to abide by the Received Text: αὕτη ἡ ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο, and translate: *"This enrolment,* [*which was*] *the first, was made when Quirinius was governor of Syria."* The frequent recurrence of the name Quirinius (Κυρῖνος) among the Latins has led the copyists to introduce into the Latin versions the form Cyrinus (or Quirinus). B has Κυρείνου for the same reason. Undoubtedly the right spelling is either Κυρήνιος or Κυρίνιος.

[8] There were shepherds in the same country, dwelling out in the fields, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. [9] And lo, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sorely afraid. [10] And the angel said to them: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people; [11] for there is born to you to-day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this is the sign to you; you will find a babe wrapped in swathing-bands, and lying in a manger.” [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:

[14] “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace to men in whom he is well pleased.” *

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* Εὐδοκίας is found in ℵ* A B D, Latt. (Vet. Vulg.) Goth. Iren. (lat.) Origen (lat.) and the hymn *Gloria in excelsis*. Εὐδοκία is read in LP ΓΔΛΕ, etc., Syr. (Pesch. Sin. Harcl.) Boh. Arm. Æth. Orig. Euseb. Bas. Greg.-Naz. Cyr.-Jerus. Did. Epiph. Cyr.-Alex. and the Greek text of the *Gloria in excelsis*. Should we abide only by the data of internal evidence, we could hardly decide for either reading; but the testimony of the texts, of the versions

[15] When the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord has shown us." [16] And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. [17] When they saw it, they made known the word which had been spoken to them about this [little] child.* [18] And all who heard marveled at the

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and of the Fathers seems clearly to favor the reading εὐδοκίας, which is adopted, as a matter of fact, in most modern critical editions. With εὐδοκία words may be cut as follows:

> Glory to God in the highest
> And on earth, Peace;
> To men, divine Good will.

This is, in fact the stichometry of several MSS. With εὐδοκίας the most acceptable, as well as the most common punctuation is the one given in the text; however Hort suggests another construction: Glory to God in the highest and on earth, Peace to men [the objects] of divine good-will. At all events, whether we read εὐδοκίας or εὐδοκία it is no question of men's, but of God's good will, of which we have just received an unparalleled token in the birth of Jesus the Savior. Cf. WESTCOTT AND HORT, *The New Testament in the Original Greek,* Introduction, Appendix, pp. 52-56.

* The Vulgate translates ἐγνώρισαν by *cognoverunt.* True, γνωρίζω may have that meaning (cf. *Philip.* 1 22); but the context, *viz.,* the following number, calls here for the meaning of *notum facere,* as the Vulgate itself translates at verse 15.

things which were told them by the shepherds. [19] But Mary kept all these words, [or: things] pondering them in her heart. [20] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

7. THE CHILD IS CIRCUMCISED, AND PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE,$^{21-38}$.

[21] And when eight days were completed for circumcising the child his name was called Jesus, which was so-called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb [of his Mother].

[22] When the days of their [or: the] purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord [23] (as it is written in the law of the Lord: "*Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord*"), * [24] and to offer a sacrifice, according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two

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* This is not a quotation strictly so called, but the statement of a most certainly Mosaic prescription. Cf. *Exod.* 13$^{2, 12}$. The text of *Genesis* accounts for the words πᾶν ἄρσεν, which are often mentioned in it, in connection with circumcision.

young pigeons.* [25] Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was just and devout, looking for the Consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. [26] It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. [27] And he came in the spirit into the temple; and when his parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do according to the custom of the law in his regard, [28] then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:

[29] "Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
[30] For my eyes have seen thy Salvation,
[31] Which thou hast prepared before the face of
all peoples;
[32] A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel."

[33] And his father and mother were marveling at the things which were spoken about him. [34] And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: "Behold, this [child] is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and as a standard which shall be opposed: [35] and a sword

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* *Levit.* 12 [8].

shall pierce through thy own soul, that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." [36] And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of great age, and lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, [37] and had been a widow for eighty-four years), who used not to depart from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. [38] And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.*

8. RETURN TO NAZARETH; JESUS IS LOST AND FOUND IN THE TEMPLE,[39-52].

[39] And when they had performed all the things that were in accordance with the law of the Lord, they [or: Joseph and Mary] returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. [40] And the child grew, and became strong, full of wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

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* All agree that the authentic text reads λύτρωσιν Ἱερουσαλήμ; the substitution of Israel for Jerusalem (which passed into the Clem. Vulg.) may probably be accounted for by those many O. T. passages, in which reference is often made to the "redemption of Israel." The reading λύτρωσιν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ is likewise an alteration, in spite of the testimony of A D, etc.

[41] Now his parents used to journey every year to Jerusalem, at the feast of the Passover. [42] When he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast; [43] and when they had completed the days [of the solemnity], as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not; [44] but supposing him to be in the caravan, they went a day's journey, and were seeking him among their relatives and acquaintances; [45] and not finding him they returned to Jerusalem, looking for him. [46] And after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors [of the law], both hearing them, and asking them questions. [47] All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. [48] And when they [or: his parents] saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him: "Son, why have you done so to us? see, your father and I have sought you sorrowing." [49] And he said to them: "How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" [50] And they did not understand the word which he spoke to them.

[51] And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject to them. And his

mother kept all these things in her heart. [52] And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and in grace with God and men.

III.

9. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS, [23-38].

[23] And Jesus himself, when he began [to teach], was about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) * the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,

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* Owing to the difficulty of the text, several attempts to smooth the construction have been made. ℵBL.Or., Euseb., Athan., Epiph., and others read ὢν υἱός, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, whilst ΑΧΓΔΛΠ and most ancient versions, including the Vulgate, have read ὢν ὡς ἐνομίζετο υἱός. These two readings, with intermediary variations, are found in prehieronymian Latin versions. Cf. J. Wordsworth, *Nov. Test. D. N. J. C., latine* . . . 1893, p. 326.

The incidental phrase ὡς ἐνομίζετο, *ut putabatur,* is a parenthesis. All the proper names are here in the genitive, as well as that of Joseph. Τοῦ is not an article defining the name that follows, but a pronoun related to the preceding name; it stands for υἱοῦ according to the well-known Hellenic idiom ὁ Φιλίππου, that of Philip, *i. e.,* Alexander: *e, f* rightly translated τοῦ by *filii.*

Moreover, there are in classical authors genealogies drawn up absolutely like that in St. Luke. Cf. Herodotus, viii, 131.

Those scholars who hold that in St. Luke we have the Blessed Virgin's genealogy suggest the following construction: "Jesus . . . being the son (as was supposed of the son of Matthat, [24] the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, [25] the son of Mattathiah, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, [26] the son of Mahath, the son of Mattathiah, the son of Semei, the son of Joseph, the son of Juda, [27] the son of Joanna [or: Joanan], the son of Resa,* the son of Zerubbabel,

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Joseph, but in reality) of Heli . . ." For them, τοῦ becomes before each name, all through the genealogy, an article depending immediately on the υἱός found in verse 23. Cf. Bacuez, *Man. Bibl.*, (new edit. by Brassac) Vol. III, p. 293. But this construction is rather strained, and unusual in genealogies, in which each term is generally connected with the preceding one. If it is suggested to make the first τοῦ before Ἡλεί an *article*, whilst before the other nouns it would be a *pronoun*, we have Ἡλεί τοῦ Ματθάτ, *Heli, that of Matthat*, a construction which cannot be grammatically upheld. According to Kruger, *Griech. Sprachlehre*, ii, §47, 5, 3, Κῦρος τοῦ Καμβύσου is a solecism.

* Rhesa, who appears in Luke, but neither in Matthew, nor in I Chron., [Paralipom.] is probably not a name at all, but a title, which some Jewish copyist mistook for a name. "Zerubbabel Rhesa," or "Zerubbabel the Prince" has been made into "Zerubbabel (begot) Rhesa." A. Plummer, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, p. 104. This is a mere conjecture, which does not rest upon any positive textual datum. At any rate, the name *Rhesa* is most appropriate in St. Luke's text, from which it can be removed, only at the expense of the numerical harmony of the septenaries, according to which the genealogy seems

the son of Salathiel, the son of Neri, [28] the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, [29] the son of Jesus, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, [30] the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, [31] the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,

the son of David, [32] the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, [33] the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram [or: Oram], the son of Hesron, the son of Peres, the son of Judah, [34] the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,

the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, [35] the son of Sarug, the son of Reu [or: Ragan], the son of Peleg [or: Phalech], the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, [36] the son of Cainan,* the son

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framed and drawn up. Cf. F. Prat, at the word *Généalogies,* in Vigouroux, *Dict. de la Bible.* In the translation, the genealogy has been divided into four series of three septenaries each, excepting the third series which counts only two septenaries.

* In the LXX, *Gen.* 10[24], 11[12], and probably, too, *I Par.* 1[18], *Cainan* is the father of Shelah, and the son of Arphaxad: but he does not appear in the Hebrew text. In St. Luke, D alone leaves him out; ℵBΓ have Καϊνάμ

of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, [37] the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, [38] the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

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instead of Καϊνάν, which is the more common spelling. Here, again, the name Cainan is called for by the numerical harmony of the genealogy; with it, we obtain three septenaries of generations between Thare and God.

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE CANONICAL GOSPELS.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL ATTACK AND DEFENCE.

THE critics who are opposed to our position first attack the character of the events related in the Gospel of the Infancy. Angelic apparitions, Magi coming from the East amidst wonderful circumstances, King Herod ordering to murder at Bethlehem all the children of two years and under, the flight into Egypt, last and chiefly, a Virgin-Mother,—all these are as many features that smack most strongly of legend and would be most appropriate in the apocryphal Gospels.

And, then, how did the origin and childhood of Jesus come to be known? At a time when public attention had not as yet fastened upon them, when His relatives themselves were far from surmising the destiny in store for the carpenter's son, His lonesome and obscure life was being spent at Nazareth. When the first and third Evangelists wrote, about the year 70, there must have been left but few witnesses of the childhood of Jesus. The persons introduced by Luke—Zachary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna

—had been gone for a long while. Whether Mary herself was still alive can well be doubted.

Besides these surmises, there are positive data that tend to throw some discredit on the historical authority of the Gospel of the Infancy. Here St. Matthew and St. Luke disagree from beginning to end; there are found in their text incoherencies that can be fully accounted for only by successive and biased after-touches. St. Luke's artificial method, especially in his Canticles, leaves the impression that he meant to write a religious poem rather than a page of history.

In fine, by comparing the Gospel of the Infancy with the rest of the New Testament, the reader becomes firmly convinced that all that narrative, the episode of the Virgin-Birth included, does not represent a primitive tradition. Hence do we find it absent from the Epistles of St. Paul and from the Gospel of St. Mark, the genuine type of the Apostolic preaching. Here we come across a later product of the belief, first rather vague, in Christ's divine origin. That creation of religious sentiment Strauss called *myth,* because in his mind it was the setting forth of an idea under the shape of a seemingly historical fact. His successors are inclined, rather, to speak of a *reaction of faith upon history;* but, after all, this is but another expression of the same thought. At all events, that *reaction,* at least as far as what pertains to the Virgin-Birth, did not simply adorn the narrative; it created that narrative. Whilst Strauss frankly confessed that his first and chief motive for denying the historical character of those texts was the supernatural character they have and profess to have,* nowadays men are fond of appealing exclusively to textual and to historical criticism.†

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* Cf. *Life of Jesus, critically examined,* London, 1892, (translated by GEORGE ELIOT), pp. 39-87.

† HOUTIN, *La Question biblique au XXème siècle,* 1906, p. 241, writes in this connection: "Heterodox critics discard that interpretation, not because they deny the possibility of a more or less extraordinary fact of 'parthenogenesis,' or even the possibility of one miracle, but because in the written accounts of the testimonies they find marks of after-touches, which do away altogether with the value of those accounts, or even make them formally contradict the designs of the correctors themselves." This is nothing but over-anxiety of impartiality towards unbelieving critics, especially in a book from which any sympathy for Catholics seems unmercifully and wilfully excluded. Personally, I feel convinced that the *a priori* denial of the supernatural has influenced, far more than is confessed, textual and chiefly historical criticism. This I will show when the opportunity comes. Besides, that proceeding perfectly agrees with the historical method, as understood by teachers whose word at the Sorbonne is authority. (Cf. LANGLOIS & SEIGNOBOS, *Introduction to the Study of History,* English translation, pp. 205-208.)

To this wholesale indictment, the cogency of which we have lessened in no way, orthodox and even merely conservative critics have not failed to give replies.

The narratives of the Infancy form a whole together with the remaining parts of the Gospels, and cannot be separated from them: they must share in the general credit enjoyed especially now by the Gospel history. Nowhere do the Evangelists hint that for them this portion of their narrative has only a problematic value. Nay, we may believe that St. Luke's purpose—a purpose explicitly stated—of taking up again everything from the very beginning with order and accuracy, had for its chief object those facts which he is the only one to relate.

Thus, if we are willing to give to that part of the canonical text the name of "Gospel of the Infancy," it is not because we look upon it as less valuable than the rest of the Gospel history, but merely because, on one hand, that appellation is of ready use, and, on the other, because it describes accurately the contents of the passages of which we are speaking.

That narrative is made up, it is true, of supernatural interventions, but are they more numerous here than in the other parts of the Gospels?

The history of thirty years has been gathered up and compressed, as it were, into two pages, and it is but natural to surmise that the most wonderful events alone have been retained.

Apparitions of Angels and of personages who had passed away many years before are to be found in the very midst of the narratives of the public life, and even in the Acts of the Apostles, which many are fond of styling the most historical book of the New Testament. After all, is the star of the Magi a more wonderful phenomenon than the voices that came from Heaven to glorify the Christ, one of which impressed the hearers in such different ways that some said: "It has thundered"; others said: "An Angel has spoken to him"? * Miracles, like that of the swine of Gerasa, and that of the half-shekel found by St. Peter in the mouth of a fish, have at least as great a taste of legend as the wonders with which the cradle of Jesus was surrounded.

These comparisons, it is true, have only the strength of arguments *ad hominem;* but they tell against those Christian scholars who would fain grant the presence of the mythical element in the narratives that refer to Our Lord's infancy.

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* LUKE 9 ^{35}; JOHN 12 $^{28, 29}$.

From this point of view, *viz.,* that of historical probability, some have quite overrated the difference between the beginnings and the sequel of the Gospel History.

Besides, granting that the life of Jesus was all that the Evangelists say it actually was—and we know that life only from their testimony—is it any wonder that His childhood also should have been surrounded with prodigies, and that a prophet, a wonder-worker who spoke and acted as no other had ever done, should have come into this world, accompanied by signs that foretold His mission? Had the contrary occurred, there would have been incoherence in His life upon earth. But God is wont to lay harmony and continuity at the basis of His works.

It has been said by some that the narratives of our canonical Gospels regarding the childhood of Jesus would not be out of place in the apocryphal Gospels. This is an assertion expressly gainsaid by other scholars, who have brought out the character of moderation and reasonableness exhibited on this subject by St. Matthew and St. Luke. What the Evangelists recorded about Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Egypt, Herod, Archelaus, Cæsar Augustus, and others, reflects most accurately the light of the times and the customs of the surroundings; and even the census of Cyrinus, difficult as it may be to determine its precise date, has very little to fear from historical criticism.

The data of our canonical Gospels have been indeed resumed after the original plan, but with certain alterations, in some of the apocryphal works, particularly in the *Protevangelium of James,* the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy;* * but it is easy to ascertain these clumsy additions. Even setting aside many historical, or, rather, unhistorical, mistakes and inaccuracies, we find, as the staple of these productions, the marvelous—and a marvelous that is useless, childish and void of any moral bearing and significance. St. Luke simply tells us that "the Child grew, and became strong, full of wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." (2^{40}.) This statement, of course, seemed to lovers of miracles altogether too short and simple, and so they chose to set forth Jesus during His childhood as a wonder-worker who spreads life and death as He passes along. When sought for its own sake, the supernatural is no longer a sign of the divine, but a means of amazing the reader, or even of putting him in good humor. Indeed, the Jesus as exhibited in the apocryphal narratives is precisely the one Herod Antipas was so anxious to see.*

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* On the origin of those Gospels, see an article of LEPIN, in the *Revue pratique d'Apologétique,* Dec. 1, 1905, p. 199.

Nor are we slow to concede, on the other hand, that a considerable share is to be granted to artificial composition in the form of the Canticles found in St. Luke; however, the substance itself remains plausible, and we have no serious reason why it should be challenged. The pious Jews of those times were wont to express, on the spur of the moment, their religious feelings in formulas borrowed from the Old Testament. The sentiments set forth in the *Magnificat,* the *Benedictus,* the *Nunc Dimittis* are in perfect harmony with the religious aspirations and literary methods of the surroundings where St. Luke says they were composed. And here the form itself tends the less to discredit the substance, that, according to the best critical scholars, the Evangelist follows closely in his first two chapters an Aramean writing: and this places the composition of the Canticles at an epoch very close to the events.

That the texts concerning the childhood of Jesus differ among themselves is an ascertained fact;

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* Luke 23 8.

but a divergence is not necessarily an irreconcilable contradiction. Catholics and conservative Protestants are not at all the only ones who have attempted to harmonize the narrative of the first and of the third Gospel; independent critics themselves feel obliged to confess that it is not impossible to complete one by the other, and thus to combine them into a whole. For instance, we can show in St. Luke the joint, as it were, where the flight into Egypt ought to have come in, had he aimed at giving us a complete record of the facts.

Whatever may be the explanation of that divergence—and none of the explanations that have been given so far is altogether satisfactory, so as to bar the way to another—it must be granted that from such a divergence a solid proof can be drawn in behalf of the historical substance itself identical in both narratives. Jesus, the Messias and the Son of God, was supernaturally conceived of the Holy Ghost, He was born of the Virgin Mary, the wife of the just Joseph; Christ came into this world at Bethlehem of Juda during the reign of King Herod, and spent His youth at Nazareth, in Galilee. Did not these essential data rest on a primitive and uniform tradition, how account for the fact that they are found most plainly in narratives that differ in the other respects? To this question radical critics have so far given no satisfactory reply.

If the supernatural conception of Jesus is merely the symbol of the belief in His heavenly origin, why is it that, for the faithful, that belief was uniformly expressed in the precise shape of a physical action of the Holy Ghost, the purpose of which was to withdraw Christ's humanity from the ordinary laws of generation? There were many other ways, indeed, to keep the stains of the flesh off God's Holy One: the Valentinians and generally all the Docetæ found it quite easy to account for His original purity without appealing to the hypothesis of the Virgin-Birth; they advanced the view that Christ had not been begotten in the womb of Mary, but had merely passed through it.

Orthodox belief has always kept equally distant from the two views it has always deemed equally false: the view of those Judaizers, who held that Jesus was born in the same way as the rest of men, and that of the Docetæ, who denied He had a human birth, properly so called. Now, that middle position did not impose itself *a priori,* as though it was a necessary deduction or the rigorous conclusion of the fundamental dogma of Redemption. Taking the point of view of mere possiblity, Christ, even granting He was Man-God, might have been brought forth according to the ordinary laws; or, on the contrary, a second Adam, He might have come into this world like the first Adam, through a creative action. If almost all Christians have always professed that Christ became a member of the human family by being really born from a virgin-mother, it is because that belief rested on a well-ascertained Apostolic tradition. In spite of the opposition it met on the part of some from the very beginning, it has remained an integral part of Christian dogma, and is set forth by all the Creeds in identical terms.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY OF THE DOGMA OF THE VIRGIN-BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

In whatever way the belief in the Virgin-Mother got hold of the Christian conscience, if it does not correspond to some real fact, evidently there must have been a time when, throughout the whole Church, men thought that Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary; and then, later on, the idea of supernatural conception must have gradually won universal assent and set aside altogether the primitive data: those of history.

Myth, as well as an intense exaltation of religious feeling, needs time to grow, and still more to get universal acceptance. This, Strauss frankly admitted; hence did he declare that his system of Gospel mythicism would fall into ruins, were it ever demonstrated that the Gospels were written by eye-witnesses or, at least, by men who were not far distant from the events.* He did not look upon that concession as compromising, since, when he wrote, critics were wont to place the composition of the Gospels as late as the middle of the 2d century and even still later. But times have changed: nowadays scholars quite generally admit that the Synoptic Gospels date from the 1st century, between the years 60 and 80; nay, many claim that the Evangelists made use of several written sources; this brings back the document on which they immediately depend, to a time very close indeed to the facts themselves.

Judging from the words of the first and third Evangelists' explicit statement, the conception of the Savior was miraculous and took place beside the ordinary laws of nature. Moreover, in this instance the divine action did not simply impart fecundity to a woman naturally barren, as was the case with Sara, Anna, and Elizabeth; but Jesus was conceived, was born of a Virgin through the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. The just Joseph, united to Mary in the bonds of a lawful wedlock, remains the witness of God's mystery, the protector of the Virgin-Mother and the foster-father of the Child. And that prodigy the Evangelists relate with all the calmness of a faith that knows on what grounds it stands. When reading their narrative we feel that their belief has obtained an undisturbed hold on their minds; hardly do we detect in St. Matthew a faint apologetical preoccupation as regards the Jews; at all events, that preoccupation is no more noticeable here than in the other parts of his Gospel. He observes, but in passing as it were, that the wonderful character of that birth had been foretold by Isaias: "Behold the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, *i. e., God with us.*" (1 [23].)

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* *Life of Jesus,* p. 69.

According to the positive testimony of history, the earliest opponent we know of the belief recorded in the Gospels was Cerinthus, the forerunner of the Judaizing Gnostics, who was spreading his doctrinal views toward the end of the 1st century. He taught that until His baptism Jesus had been merely the son of Joseph and Mary; it was in the waters of the Jordan that He became the Messias, because the Christ (according to St. Irenæus) or the Holy Ghost (according to St. Hippolytus) then came down upon Him and remained with Him until the time of His passion. On the whole that view was also held later on by the Judaizers of Palestine, vaguely styled Ebionites by the early orthodox historians and opponents of heresies.*

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* The Latin translation of St. Irenæus, I, xxvi, 2,—the Greek text being lost—is as follows: "Qui autem dicuntur Ebionæi, consentiunt quidem mundum a Deo factum: ea autem, quæ sunt erga Dominum, non similiter ut Cerinthus et Carpocrates."

Some scholars have proposed to read *consimiliter* instead of *non similiter*. Dom Massuet, who retains this latter reading, thinks that St. Irenæus intends to speak of those among the Ebionites, who admitted the Savior's Virgin-Birth. I am inclined to suppose that here the Bishop of Lyons refers to the Ebionites in general, and that, agreeably to what we learn from antiquity in their regard, he reckons them among the opponents of the Virgin-Birth. (Cf. EUSEB., *H. E.*, III, xxvii; ST. EPIPH., *Adv. Hær.*, xxx, 2; THEODCR., *Hær. fab.*, II, cap. i; ST. IRENÆUS himself, III, xxi, 1; V, i, 3.)

To make the present text agree with all those testimonies, it suffices to point as follows: *ea autem quæ sunt erga*

Mgr. Duchesne * looks upon the Ebionism of the 2d and 3d centuries as some kind of a late survival of an undeveloped primitive Judaic Christianity; and he adds that as to whether or not the Savior was the son of Joseph, there were among them various opinions. According to Origen, followed by Eusebius and Theodoret,† the Virgin-Birth was held by a certain number of Ebionites.

Dominum non similiter, [*sed*] *ut Cerinthus et Carpocrates.*

Had we the Greek text, the worth of my conjecture might be better judged. In Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* Vol. II, p. 640, Sanday comes, though by another way, to the same conclusion as to the proper understanding of the text of St. Irenæus. By comparing together *Adv. Hæres.,* I, xxvi, 2 and *Philosophumena,* VII, xxxv, 1, (with which Dom Massuet was not acquainted), he proposes to omit *non* before *similiter,* as an alteration of the authentic text.

* *The Early History of the Christian Church,* p. 91.

† Origen, *Contra Cels.,* v, 61; Euseb., *H. E.,* III, xxvii; Theodor., *Hær. fab.,* c. I. As late as the middle of the 2d century, St. Justin still knows some *orthodox* Judaizers; at least this is his personal view. (*Dialogue,* 47.) Now, by comparing this passage with what follows in the Dialogue, one becomes convinced that those Judaizers probably held Christ's virginal birth. As to St. Epiphanius (*Adv. Hær.,* 30), he looks upon Ebionism as some Proteus; and as a matter of fact he was unable to draw out its outlines with anything like precision.

Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma,* Vol. I, p. 304.

Did those heretics of a milder kind—identified by some scholars with the Nazarenes, distinguished by others from that sect—escape the notice of St. Irenæus and of Tertullian, who do not speak of them; or did their sect arise only later on from coming nearer to orthodox Christianity, especially as regards Christ's conception? Rose * is inclined to believe—rightly, we think—that they are rather the authentic remnants of the early Judaizers. Hegesippus, a Judæo-Christian, who wrote toward the middle of the 2d century, favors apparently that view when he states that, until Trajan's time (98-117), the

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* *Studies on the Gospels,* pp. 80-81.

A few lines further on, (p. 82), the same writer concludes as follows: "However this may be, from the point of view of history, the importance of this small sect appears quite secondary. It is only one limb of little value severed from the great Judæo-Christian community. If its faith was ever the primitive faith, it is to blame for not having completed and vivified it with the evangelical riches which little by little came to light. Perhaps, and indeed very probably, its error was only a relapse; a simple return to the Messianic ideas of Pharisaic Judaism."

However it must be granted that St. Epiphanius, (*Adv. Hær.,* xxx, 3), hardly favors this last hypothesis. Besides, St. Jerome writes to St. Augustine (*Epist.,* cxxii, 13,) regarding the Nazarenes: "Qui credunt in Christum filium Dei natum de virgine Maria, in quem et nos credimus."

Church of Jerusalem remained unspotted in her faith: this brings us back to the age of Cerinthus.

But now, how reconcile the view of the heterodox Ebionites about the purely human origin of Jesus with the fact, attested by St. Irenæus,* that they admitted St. Matthew's Gospel, where the supernatural conception is expressly related? St. Epiphanius gives us the answer, I believe, when he says that the text received by the Ebionites did not include the first two chapters.† Later on we will try to find out the origin of that textual difference and appreciate its bearing; here we may simply observe that nowhere are we told that those Judaizers opposed the common belief in the name of a primitive tradition. Their view on this subject was a consequence of their attitude toward Jesus' Messiaship and Divinity: since He had become Christ only on the day of His Baptism, He had been, until then, a plain, ordinary man. This St. Epiphanius expressly remarks: on this point, the Ebionites were influenced by their erroneous views about Christ's preëxistence and the part He had played in the creation of the world.‡

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* *Contra Hær.*, III, x, 7.

† *Adv. Hær.*, XXX, 13, 14.

‡ *Ibid.*, 16.

Cerinthus pushed still further the logical consequences of his system. Professing, as all Gnostics did, the essential impurity of all that was bodily, he could not admit in Jesus an intimate and close union between the divine and the human nature; hence he distinguished in Him the man and the Son of God to such a degree that he actually disunited them. Whilst the latter was born of God, the former could be but the offspring of Joseph and Mary, because, in the words of St. Irenæus, "the contrary seemed to him impossible." *

During the whole of the 2d century, even at its beginning, most Christians believe in the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ, as can be proved from explicit testimonies, which are comparatively many, if we take into account the very small number of the documents of that epoch that have reached us. It is not in passing, as it were, that the apologists who wrote them allude to the question; they dwell upon it, and their explanations are such as to lead us to believe that what is at stake is no mere pious opinion, in favor of something deemed more worthy of Christ, but a necessary teaching, closely connected with that doc-

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* *Contra Hær.*, I, xxvi, 1. "Jesum autem subjecit non ex virgine natum, *impossibile enim hoc ei visum est;* fuisse autem Joseph et Mariæ filium" . . .

trinal system bearing on the person of Jesus, which we now call Primitive Christology.

True it is that the orthodox met a certain number of opponents: but were perfect unanimity required that one may have the right to affirm that a belief is part and parcel of Christian Dogma, where, we ask, is the article of the Creed that would stand the trial? As early as St. Paul's time, there were heresies, which, besides, bore on most important points: and far from being surprised and put out, the Apostle declares that this is a condition of things which enters into the divine plan.* Moreover, that the Virgin-Birth should have been called in question or flatly denied is not to be wondered at, especially as its historical attestation, owing to the nature of the fact itself, involves special difficulties.

Toward the year 106 an immediate disciple of the Apostles, St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, which was then the metropolis of the East, puts on the same level the Virgin-Birth and the atoning death of the Son of God.

"And hidden from the prince of this world were the virginity of Mary and her child-bearing and likewise also the death of the Lord—three mysteries to be cried aloud—the which were wrought in the silence of God." (LIGHTFOOT'S transl.)[*]

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* *I Cor.*, 11[19].

St. Ignatius means that at the moment Mary conceived and then brought forth, the mystery of the Virgin-Mother was known but to God and to the only creature who was to be necessarily associated with it; men and devils thought that Jesus was a plain, ordinary man coming into this world; the just Joseph himself was let into the divine plan only some time after. Likewise, when Jesus breathed His last, very few indeed were those who knew that on that infamous gibbet the Son of God was dying.

Now, against the authenticity of this text, which was well known all through the early ages of Christianity, not even the least doubt can be raised.[†]

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[*] *Ἡ παρθενεία* Μαρίας *καὶ ὁ τοκετὸς αὐτῆς, ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ θάνατος τοῦ κυρίου τρία μυστήρια κραυγῆς ἅτινα ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ θεοῦ ἐπράχθη* (*Ad Ephes.*, xix.)

In the previous chapter, the holy Martyr affirms that "Our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived in the womb of Mary according to a dispensation, of the seed of David, but also of the Holy Ghost."

In chapter vii, 2, he declares Him "Son of Mary and Son of God," "*καὶ ἐκ* Μαρίας *καὶ ἐκ* Θεοῦ"; cf. *Epist. ad Trall.*, ix.

In the Epistle to the Smyrnæans, I, he writes: *γεγενημένον ἀληθῶς ἐκ παρθένου*, "*truly born of a virgin.*"

[†] See F. X. FUNK, *Patres Apostolici*, i, p. 187.

During the Emperor Hadrian's sojourn in Athens, toward the year 125—perhaps a few years later—the philosopher Aristides handed him an apology in behalf of the Christians. That writing, which was thought irremediably lost, has been wholly recovered in a Syriac translation.* Now, among the essential points of Christian teaching, that are there enumerated, the Virgin-Birth stands side by side with the Incarnation, the death on the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension. "The Christians reckon the beginning of their religion from Jesus Christ, who is named the Son of God most High; and it is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin took and clad Himself with flesh, and in a daughter of man there dwelt the Son of God." †

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* J. Rendel Harris, *The Apology of Aristides,* Cambridge, 1891, in the collection *Texts and Studies,* Vol. I, fasc. I.

† *Op. cit.,* p. 36. This passage is reproduced almost word for word in a fragment of the Armenian version: "He is Himself Son of God on high, who was manifested of [*or* with] the Holy Spirit, came down from heaven, and being born of a Hebrew virgin took on His flesh from the virgin, and was manifested in the nature of humanity the Son of God. . . . He it is who was according to the flesh born of the race of the Hebrews, by the God-bearing virgin Miriam [Mary]."

Compare the fragment published in the *Anal. Sacra* of Dom Pitra, 1882, Vol. IV, pp. 8 and 284.

Most scholars think that this passage of Aristides' Apology was borrowed from a symbol of faith used in the Churches of Achaia; some even have attempted to restore its primitive formula by means of the whole text; all agree on assigning a prominent part to the article that refers to the supernatural conception of Christ through the action of the Holy Ghost.*

After Aristides, another philosopher, who was born in Palestine, took up also the defence of Christianity; he addressed his work to the Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161); and this superscription enables us to date St. Justin's First Apology from the middle of the 2d century.

After enlarging upon the argument *ad hominem,* which amounts to telling the Greeks that they ought not to take exception to some Christian doctrines, since their own theogonies present features that are similar to those of the Christian system, he adds: "If we even affirm that He was born of a Virgin, accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus." * As a matter of fact, there is an essential difference between the miraculous birth of Jesus and the legend about the origin of the Greek heroes. The former was foretold many ages before by the Hebrew Prophets, especially by Isaias; as to the fabulous stories of poets, given out to children in schools, without any reason in their support, they arise from the skill of the demons who are bent on drawing mankind into error. As they knew beforehand, from the Prophetical writings, that Christ was to be born of a Virgin, they devised a story, that of Perseus, so as to decrease the reasonableness of the true prophecy: in that attempt at falsification, however, they have poorly succeeded.†

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* The following is the restoration proposed by R. HARRIS, p. 25: "We believe in one God, Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth: and in Jesus Christ His Son—Born of the Virgin Mary:—He was pierced by the Jews: He died and was buried: the third day He rose again: He ascended into Heaven;—He is about to come to judge."

Another attempt of the same kind may be seen in RESCH, *Kindheitsevangelium,* p. 295.

Whatever may be the value of this explanation, we have quoted this passage of St. Justin not for its own sake, but simply because it proves that the belief in Christ's Virgin-Birth had gone beyond the narrow limits of the Church's circle, since it had to be defended against attacks from the outside.

Yet, it is chiefly in the *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* that the Christian polemic dwells on the dogma of the Virgin-Mother. That insistency was needed in Palestine, for that country had witnessed the rise of the Judaizing sects, which on that topic gave the lie to the orthodox creed. After recalling the prophecy of Isaias (7^{14}), St. Justin remarks that Christ is the only descendant of Abraham that has ever been maintained to have been born of a Virgin;* and as the Greek scholars of the time, whether Jews or Judæo-Christians, did not read in the version παρθένος (virgin), but νεᾶνις (maiden), and understood of King Ezekias the whole passage, the Apologist promises to give a demonstration on this point,† a promise which he actually fulfills a few lines below.‡ Trypho objects that the Jews expect a Christ who will be only a mere man, and who will be born of men.§ Justin applies himself to prove directly that the prophecy of Isaias refers only to Christ,|| and in this connection draws a graceful parallel between Eve and Mary. The former, having conceived the word of the serpent when she was still a virgin and undefiled (ἄφθορος), brought forth disobedience and death;

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* *I Apol.*, 22.

† *Ibid.*, 21-22; cf. 54.

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* *Dial.*, 43.

† *Ibid.*, 43.

‡ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

§ *Ibid.*, 49.

|| *Ibid.*, 66, 84.

on the other hand, the latter received faith and joy when the Angel Gabriel brought her the good tidings that the Spirit of the Lord would come down upon her, and that the power of the Most High would overshadow her; then "she answered: 'Be it done unto me, according to thy word.' And by her has He been born of whom so many Scriptures affirm that He conquered the serpent." [*] As Trypho taunted the Christians for reproducing the ridiculous stories of the Greeks, especially that of Perseus, who was represented as the offspring of the virgin Danæ and of Jupiter, St. Justin comes back to the theory of the falsification of the divine mysteries attempted by the demons.[†]

We come now to the passage of the Dialogue to which modern critics have paid a most special attention. We shall give it almost entire. "Now assuredly [the proof] that this man is the Christ of God does not fail, though I be unable to prove that He existed formerly as Son of the Maker of all things, being God, and was born a man by the (*or* a) Virgin. . . . For there are some, my friends, amongst us (*τινές ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου* γένους) who admit that He is Christ, whilst holding Him to be a man born of men;* with whom I do not agree, nor would I, even though most of those who have the same opinions as myself should say so; since we were enjoined by Christ Himself to put no faith in human doctrines, but in those proclaimed by the blessed Prophets and taught by Himself." *

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[*] *Ibid.*, 100; cf. also 113, 120, 127, for incidental references to the same subject.

[†] *Ibid.*, 67.

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* Our quotation and translation are from the text of Dom Maranus, reproduced in Migne, *P. G.*, vi, 581.—The learned editor chose the reading ἡμετέρου γένους, *nostri generis,* thus referring the pronoun to those Christians who were of Jewish origin; *i. e.,* to the Ebionites. In a footnote, he attempts to show that St. Justin uses elsewhere the word γένος in a broad sense, so as to designate not only those of the same race, but also those of the same category. Cf. *Dial.,* 35, 82, and *I Apol.,* 26. In his *History of Dogma,* Vol. I, p. 297, n. 3, after comparing the printed editions with the *Codex Paris.,* Harnack thinks we should read ὑμετέρου γένους, *generis vestri,* thus referring the pronoun to the Jews. However, he also grants that the opponents of the Virgin-Birth, to whom the Apologist alludes, are Judæo-Christians.—The question is unimportant as to the use we intend now to make of St. Justin's words. Whatever the authentic reading may be, this much is beyond doubt, that toward the middle of the 2d century, very few indeed are those who deny the belief in the Virgin-Birth. At all events, the text of St. Justin does not entitle critics to affirm, as Herzog does in the *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. Relig.,* 1907, p. 132, that "the Ebionites alone had preserved the teaching received in the genealogical lists." Origen, on this point a far more competent judge than we are, affirms that some Christians who had come from the Gentile world took exception to this dogma. *Comm. in Matt.,* Vol. xvi, 12; Migne, *P. G.,* xiii, 1413.

This text shows most explicitly that for St. Justin the Virgin-Birth is not a mere opinion, but a certain and essential article of the Christian faith; that this doctrine is not the conclusion of an argument, nor a teaching necessarily called for by a system, but an assertion, a part of the tradition both of ancient Jews and of Christians; finally, that most Christians, nay, almost all (πλεῖστοι) Christians, even in Palestine, hold that belief. True, some (τινές) think differently: but their view may be passed by, since they are outside true tradition.†

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St. Irenæus has been called the earliest theologian of the Virgin-Mother, because he has described, better than any one of his contemporaries, Mary's share in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word.

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* *Dialog.*, 48.

† Hence when Fred. C. Conybeare, in the *Standard,* May 11, 1905, translates τινές by *many,* he strains the meaning of the term. That mistake becomes still more serious when Houtin, *La Question Biblique au XXème Siècle,* p. 248, renders the English word *many* by the French *beaucoup.*

In the summary of the Catholic faith he gives at the beginning of his great work, *Against Heresies,* the Virgin-Birth holds its fitting place, between the article regarding the Incarnation in general and that regarding the Savior's Passion.* For Irenæus that point is so important that he does not separate it from his belief in Our Lord's divinity. "But, again," he says, "those who assert that He [Jesus] was a mere man, begotten by Joseph, remain in the bondage of the old disobedience and are in a state of death; not having been as yet joined to the Word of God the Father, nor receiving liberty through the Son, as He does Himself declare: 'If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.' But, being ignorant of Him who, being born from the Virgin, is Emmanuel, they are deprived of His gift, which is eternal life."†

A few lines afterwards, whilst dwelling on the prophecy of Isaias (7^{14}), St. Irenæus manifestly alludes to the fourth Gospel (1^{13}); ‡ then he adds: "If He were the Son of Joseph, how could He be greater than other men? How could St. Peter have proclaimed Him the Son of the living God? * Those who hope in a Jesus begotten of Joseph fall under the curse directed against Jechoniah and his seed. As Adam was formed by God from virgin soil, so the Christ was made by God of a Virgin-Mother."†

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* I, x, 1: ((καὶ τὴν ἐκ Παρθένου γέννησιν)).

† III, xix, 1.

‡ We shall come back later on to this peculiar reading *"qui ex Deo natus est,"* instead of *"qui ex Deo nati sunt."* Cf. p.

The contrast between Eve and Mary, which had been only outlined by St. Justin, is now taken up and developed in such a way that it becomes a distinctive feature of the teaching of St. Irenæus. "Just as, through her disobedience, Eve, being espoused to a man, but still a virgin, brought death to herself and to all mankind; so, also, through her obedience, Mary, who had also a predestined husband, and was also a virgin, brought salvation to herself and to all humanity. . . . Just as the former was led astray by the word of an angel, so that she fled from God when she had transgressed His word; so did the latter by an angelic communication receive the glad tidings that she should sustain God, being obedient

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* III, xxi, 8.

† This is a mere summary of a long passage, the whole of which should be read: III, xxi, 1-10.

to His word. And if the former did disobey God, yet the latter was persuaded to be obedient to God in order that the Virgin Mary might become the advocate of the virgin Eve. And thus, as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so it is rescued by a virgin." *

This, then, is the way in which the tradition brought into Gaul from the East set forth, toward the year 180, the Christian dogma. Nay, even the theological explanations with which it is accompanied are already traditional; at least, they were current as early as the first half of the 2d century, as may be inferred from their presence in St. Justin.

That at that time the belief in Christ's Virgin-Birth was already considered a tradition of Apostolic origin necessarily follows from the fact that this belief is recorded in the various formularies of faith that were then current, and that all depend on a common type commonly called *the Apostles' Creed.*† The formula, "Conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin

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* V, xix, 1; cf. IV, xxiii, where he sums up the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel.

† Regarding the origin and history of that Creed, and also regarding its wording in the 2d century, cf. VACANT'S *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique,* vol. I, col. 1660-1680.

Mary," which seems to have prevailed as early as the second half of the 4th century, at least in the West, is merely the legitimate development of another more ancient: "born of the Holy Ghost through the Virgin Mary" ;* or, again: "born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary." As far as may be gathered from the writings of the 2d century, the primitive formula was probably, "born of the Virgin Mary." Thus reduced to its most simple expression, this article exposes substantially the Christian dogma, which will be later on stated more accurately by means of a few changes, called for by the denials or the wiles of heresy.

The faith held during the 2d century passes on whole and unquestioned to the following generations. In the midst of the long and momentous turmoil of Arianism, Mary's privilege is left intact; and when, during the 4th century, Helvidius and the "Antidikomarianites"† deny the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God, they never call in doubt the fact that she conceived Christ supernaturally. The Jews themselves then realized that a belief so deeply rooted must be taken into account, and instead of representing obstinately Jesus as the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary, they chose to look upon Him as an adulterous offspring. At least, that is the gross slander placed on the lips of a Jew by Celsus, who wrote between the years 177 and 180: a mere insult, says Origen,[*] which is still more incredible than the early denials. What makes us believe that the introduction of the Jew into the "True Discourse" is not simply a literary fancy on the part of the author, is that the legend exposed by the Jew is found later on in Jewish writings, particularly in the Talmud,[†] and in the libel entitled *Toledoth Jesu.*[‡]

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*'Ἐκ is used instead of διά, against the Valentinians.

† The word is from St. Epiphanius. Cf. SCHAFF, *History of the Christian Church,* Vol. III, p. 417.

The coarse tale concocted by the Jews was almost confined to the Ghetto; the opposition of the Judaizers soon disappeared or changed together with the sect itself, so that never, from the middle of the 3d to the end of the 18th century, do we hear the Virgin-Birth of Our Lord called in question.*

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[*] *Contra Celsum*, i, 28, 32-37. After discussing in detail all the assertions of Celsus or of his Jew, Origen adds that such a fancy is more worthy of a buffoon than of a writer who has any sense of self-respect: **Ταῦτα βωμολόχῳ ἔπρεπε τὰ ῥήματα, καὶ οὐ σπουδάζοντί ἐν τῃ ἀπαγγελίᾳ.**

[†] Cf. *Sanh.*, f. 67, 1; *Schabb.*, f. 104, 2; *Chaghiga* Jerus., f. 77, 4; Babyl., f. 4, 2. DR. SAM. STRAUSS, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, p. 214, has quite recently reëdited all those slanderous reports. Cf. LAIBLE, *Jesus Christus im Talmud;* HERFORD, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash.*

[‡] A work of the 13th century.

CHAPTER III.

MODERN OPPONENTS.

No UNBELIEVERS, down to the Encyclopædists themselves, did more than to rehash the attacks of Celsus, Porphyry and Julian the Apostate against the authority of the Gospels. These attacks amount to affirm that the Evangelists' testimony cannot always be received: on many points, they are either deceived or deceivers. Their narrative is cut into two parts, as it were: all that tends to reduce Christ to man's level is retained as true; as to His wonderful deeds, they are simply dismissed as the products of lie or of legend. How arbitrary such a proceeding is and how damaging to the moral character of the Founder of Christianity, Origen did not fail to point out in his criticism of Celsus.*

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* The history of the early Christian belief in Christ's supernatural conception has been exposed by SWETE, *The Apostles' Creed,* ch. iv; and still more recently by T. ALLEN HOBEN, *The Virgin-Birth,* in the *American Journal of Theology,* July and October, 1902. The definitions of the Church on this point may be read in DENZINGER. *Enchiridion,* nn. 113, 132, 204, 229, 880 (new edit., 1908, nn. 19, 143, 256, 282, 993).

However, Voltaire's witty sarcasms soon proved unable to hold successfully in check records as venerable as the Gospels. The Deists, who prided themselves on using what they styled the right method in matters of history and philosophy, wished to get rid of the supernatural in a far more dignified manner. Their spokesman was first Gottlob Paulus.† The fundamental principle of his criticism consists in distinguishing, in the Gospel history, the facts themselves from the judgments that are passed on their nature. In the time of Jesus almost all were inclined to look upon any striking occurrence as the result of an unseen and superhuman cause. Both writers and readers believed in the supernatural, that is to say in the immediate intervention of the First Cause; and they thought they could, in this way, reduce to unity all the various phenomena that take place in this world. If we only leave aside the appreciations dictated by religious prejudice, we shall get what remains of the true history of Jesus: His merely natural life, such as it actually occurred.

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* *Contra Celsum*, ii, 33, 37.

† The work of Paulus, which began about the year 1800 with some exegetical studies on the Gospels, is summed up in a *Life of Jesus*, which appeared in 1828, with the significant title: *Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums.*

What became of the Gospel in this exegetical system can be seen in any text-book of Biblical Criticism; * here we shall recall to our readers' mind but one detail, which pertains to the very heart of the question. It will suffice for our purpose to manifest the scantiness and clumsiness of that naturalistic criticism which would keep the Gospels, whilst excluding the Gospel historians themselves.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, the Angel—who, by the way, was but a fictitious personage—did not mean to tell Joseph that Mary had become pregnant without man's coöperation, but only that, in spite of her pregnancy, she was to be looked upon as perfectly stainless. The dialogue between Gabriel and Mary, in St. Luke, offered still more resistance to that fanciful exegesis. Hence, in this case, Paulus does away with any half-measure; he boldly introduces into the scene of the Annunciation a third person; the Angel Gabriel is nothing else than a man in full flesh and blood;

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*Cf. Vigouroux, *Les Livres Saints et la Critique Rationaliste,* 3d edit., Vol. II, p. 436.

Mary was simply deceived; Elisabeth is suspected to have been the prime mover of the pious plot. Venturini goes still further; he modestly surmises that the hero of all this intrigue is none but Joseph of Arimathea,* and in order to confirm his conjecture he fondly relates a trick of opera-comic he has read in the historian Josephus.† Here we are again in presence of the old Jewish slander which we had already met for the first time in Celsus and in the Talmud.

Protestant theologians, like Olshausen and Hengstenberg, were not slow to point out from the very first to fair-minded Germans the radical defects of Paulus' hypothesis. It was soon realized that for any one to attempt to reduce to natural proportions a history constantly thought out and written from a supernatural point of view was not unlike attempting to unsalt the sea. The attack had been so unreasonable that, instead of being overthrown, the authority of the Gospel records had been but enhanced by it.

Then it was that David Frederick Strauss set out to interpret the Bible, including the New

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* In his *Natural History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth.*

† *Antiq. Jud.*, XVIII, iii, 4.

Testament, according to the mythological method which had been already applied to the profane history of the nations of old. The title *Life of Jesus,* he gave to his work (1835) * is not well chosen, for the author is more intent on stating with precision the historical value of the Gospels than on relating the life of Christ. His predecessors, in this respect, had done honor to religious feeling.† Afraid, as they were, of putting the Gospels on the same level as other books, they spoke of *historical myth,* by which was meant the narrative of facts that were real indeed, but colored, as it were, by ancient opinion, which was fond of associating the divine with the human. They admitted, too, the *poetical myth*—that is, a kind of poem substantially historical, in which, however, the primitive fact is modified, though not altogether done away with, by and under the fancies of a youthful and rich imagination. On the other hand, the same scholars denied that in the Gospels there was the *myth strictly so called*—whether philosophical or religious does not matter—which consists in setting forth an idea or a doctrine under an historical form, and in giving it the turn, as it were, of an actual occurrence, although the narrative, as such, corresponds to nothing real and concrete. Most of those scholars spoke of *legend* rather than of myth, and even then, restricting legendary narratives to the first pages of the Gospels, they appealed almost exclusively to them, as an explanation of the origin of Jesus' infancy.

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* [Strauss' work has been translated into English by George Eliot. The subsequent references are to the second edition of that translation, London and New York, 1892.—T.]

† Especially Gabler, Bauer, Schelling, Schleiermacher, de Wette, and the anonymous author of the work on *Religion and Mythology* (1799).

All those attempts seemed to Strauss as many clumsy compromises; he thought that, after all, they were mere modifications of Paulus' view, since, according to those hypotheses also, the exegete had only to separate the more or less disfigured fact from what popular fancy had added to it. Therefore he will be radical and speak of the *Gospel myth,* just as others spoke of the Greek myth. He defines it "a narrative relating directly or indirectly to Jesus, which may be considered not as the expression of a fact, but as the product of an idea of his earliest followers." *

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* *Life of Jesus,* p. 86. Even thus understood, the *myth* is distinct from the parable. The latter claims to be a

Is the Gospel myth the result of an individual conception or a creation of the popular view? Strauss admits that the tradition recorded in the Gospels formed and developed gradually under that twofold influence; he speaks even of later additions, which must be ascribed to the Evangelists themselves and have for their purpose to place the things more vividly before the reader, to give them more connexion and development. However, he confesses that it is no easy task accurately to discriminate between wilful fiction and spontaneous legend.

As may be seen, Paulus' view is given up; the wonderful character of the Gospel narrative depends no longer on the judgment of the *contemporaries,* who, we are told by Paulus, attempted to connect the facts with a supernatural cause; for

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fiction, having only a didactic value, the former essentially implies a kind of equivalence between the idea and the fact in which that idea is expressed and moulded, as it were. On one occasion Jesus described by means of a fiction the fate that awaited the unbelieving Synagogue: this is the parable of the gardener and of the barren fig-tree (Luke 13 [6]); some mythologists maintain that popular imagination soon transformed that parable into a fact, the one related in Mark 11 [13]; according to them, we have here a myth strictly so called. Although their hypothesis has no sufficient grounds, still it serves to illustrate the difference between a parable and a myth.

Strauss, the belief of *subsequent generations* casts itself back, as it were, into the field of history. Then, too, Strauss admits that here and there we find in the Gospels narratives and features that are not void of reality; they represent all that has been transmitted to us of the true life of Jesus.

How can we distinguish these historical data from the mythological fancies with which they are woven up? To this important question the author of the *Life of Jesus* devotes the last paragraph of his introduction; and there he sets forth a certain number of rules which he himself felt were lacking in precision. The following is the most striking passage: "Where not merely the particular nature and manner of an occurrence is critically suspicious, its external circumstances represented as miraculous and the like; but where likewise the essential substance and groundwork is either inconceivable in itself, or is in striking harmony with some Messianic idea of the Jews of that age, then not the particular alleged course and mode of the transaction only, but the entire occurrence must be regarded as unhistorical. Where, on the contrary, the form only, and not the general contents of the narration, exhibits the characteristics of the unhistorical, it is at least possible to suppose a kernel of historical fact; although we can never confidently decide whether this kernel of fact actually exists, or in what it consists; unless, indeed, it be discoverable from other sources." *

Before this system of interpretation is minutely applied to the New Testament, a most momentous difficulty has to be removed. That difficulty comes from the fact that, at the time of Jesus, the mythical ages had long ceased to exist; men moved and deeds were accomplished in the full light of history; Jewish literature is rather considerable; that of the Christians reckons, in less than fifty years, twenty-six books which are said to have been written by contemporaries. "It would be," says Strauss, "most unquestionably an argument of decisive weight in favor of the credibility of the biblical history, could it indeed be shown that it was written by eye-witnesses, or even by persons nearly contemporaneous with the events narrated."† Hence the followers of the mythical theory profited most gladly by the current of thought which was started at that time by a Tübingen scholar, Christian Baur, who assigned

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* *Life of Jesus,* p. 91.

† *Ibid.,* p. 69.

to a late period the composition of the Gospels. Another circumstance which, according to Strauss, could be put to the best account, comes from the nature of the Messianic myth itself. In his eyes, that myth existed already in the first century of our era, and the only thing that remained to be done was to apply it to Jesus of Nazareth. Under the influence of an exegesis, erroneous according to Strauss, although common among the Jews, the best part of the Old Testament was applied to the Messias that was to come. This is the chief source of the Messianic legend which is manifest in popular views.

"The Messiah was to come of the race of David, and as a second David take possession of his throne; and therefore in the time of Jesus it was expected that He, like David, should be born in the little village of Bethlehem. . . . In general, the whole Messianic era was expected to be full of signs and wonders. The eyes of the blind should be opened, the ears of the deaf should be unclosed, the lame should leap, and the tongue of the dumb praise God (ISAIAH 35 [5]; cf. 42 [7]; 32 [3, 4]). These merely figurative expressions soon came to be understood literally (MATT. 11 [5]; LUKE 7 [21]); and thus the idea of the Messiah was continually filled up with new details, even before the appearance of Jesus. Thus many of the legends respecting Him had not to be newly invented; they already existed in the popular hope of the Messiah, having been mostly derived with various modifications from the Old Testament, and had merely to be transferred to Jesus, and accommodated to His character and doctrines. In no case could it be easier for the person who first added any new feature to the description of Jesus to believe himself its genuineness, since his argument would be: Such and such things must have happened to the Messiah; Jesus was the Messiah; therefore such and such things happened to Him." *

These are the broad outlines of the mythical system proposed by Strauss; now we may see how he applies it to the Gospel records that pertain to the infancy of Jesus.†

The Precursor's miraculous birth is a mere reproduction of those narratives of the Old Testament referring to barren couples which in spite of their advanced age became fecund because of a special divine blessing. John the Baptist is one more late child, such as were Isaac, Samson, and Samuel. The whole narrative in St. Luke was

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* *Life of Jesus,* pp. 83-84.

† *Life of Jesus,* pp. 93-205.

composed by a Judaizing Christian when there were still some disciples who clung to John alone; the author's purpose is to draw them to Christianity by representing their Master as the greatest of all Prophets sent by God to prepare the way for the Messias. The only certain historical fact is merely this: By his authority and preaching, John made so powerful an impression that subsequently Christian legend was led to glorify his birth and to associate it with that of Jesus.

The genealogies given in the first and in the third Gospel are unhistorical: both were devised in order that the title of Son of David, commonly given to the Messias in Jewish literature, might be legally claimed in behalf of Jesus of Nazareth. The birth of several illustrious men of the Old Testament had been announced beforehand by a heavenly apparition; could less be done for the Messias? . . . and here it was that Christians remembered that, according to Isaias, the Emmanuel was to be born of a Virgin. The whole narrative of Matthew and Luke was built up from this point of view. However, Strauss remarks, that hypothesis cannot be held, for "Plutark's remark: 'Never has a woman been reported to have begotten without man's help,' and Cerinthus' *impossible* become applicable."

Our author knows well that some scholars have accumulated examples of virginal birth, taken from Græco-Roman mythology: Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Romulus, Alexander, above all Pythagoras and Plato, were looked upon as born of a god and of a mortal mother. Although his view needs all the support it can get, Strauss attaches little value to these analogies, for he is fully conscious of the essential differences that are to be found between the Judæo-Christian religion and Heathenism.

St. Luke takes Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, merely to be able to invoke in behalf of Jesus the prophecy of Michæas (5 [3]). "Thus we have here neither a fixed point for the date of the birth of Jesus, nor an [historical] explanation of the occasion which led to his being born precisely at Bethlehem. If then—it may justly be said—no other reason why Jesus should have been born at Bethlehem can be adduced than that given by Luke, we have absolutely no guarantee that Bethlehem was his birthplace." *

"The Angels did not appear to the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, who were full of all malice, but to the shepherds, in the fields, on

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* *Life of Jesus*, p. 156.

account of their simplicity and innocence, and because they by their mode of life were the successors of the patriarchs. It was in the field by the flocks that Moses was visited by a heavenly apparition; and God took David, the forefather of the Messiah, from his sheepfolds (at Bethlehem) to be the shepherd of his people." (Psalm 78 [70].)*

The story of the Magi, related by Matthew, is only an equivalent for that of the shepherds, told by St. Luke. In these two stories we have two ways of introducing the Messianic child: one has for its purpose to announce the birth of Jesus to the neighborhood, the other to announce it to far-distant countries. Besides, neither of these two narratives is historical at all. When announcing that a star was to rise out of Jacob, Balaam's prophecy did not refer to a genuine star; it merely compared to a star the expected prince; but because of the growing belief in astrology, the passage soon came to be literally understood. Hence the birth of Jesus *must* have been announced by a star; and who could have observed the phenomenon better than professional astrologers, of whom the East was the classical home! The gifts which we are told were made by the Magi, were suggested by the text of Isaias (60 [5, 6]).

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* *Ibid.*, p. 160. [It may be observed that the first part of this quotation is a quotation, though distorted, from Theophylactus.—T.]

"To represent a murderous decree as having been directed by Herod against Jesus, was the interest of the primitive Christian legend. In all times, legend has glorified the infancy of great men by persecutions and attempts on their life." * Again, the murders committed by the hateful Idumæan even in his family gave an appearance of probability to the part assigned to him in the Bethlehem massacre. As to the choice of Egypt, as a place of refuge for Jesus, we can easily account for it: because owing to its proximity, that country was the most convenient asylum for any one fleeing from Judæa

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* Life of Jesus, p. 175. Strauss instances Cyrus (HERODOTUS, i, 108); Romulus (LIVY, i, 4); August
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cles found in St. Luke, they remind us of those of the Old Testament: for instance, of the Canticle of the mother of Samuel; they are hymns borrowed from the earliest liturgy of the Christian communities. The ending of Matthew's narrative is intended to shield Jesus, as it were, from the popular prejudice that "nothing good can come out of Nazareth." The scene of Jesus in the Temple and in the midst of the Doctors is not without precedents in the Old Testament. Witness Samuel's precocious wisdom and prophetical utterances, or what the historian Josephus relates of himself, even though his was but an ordinary talent. *

The reader who has followed that exposition of mythological exegesis applied to the Gospels, surely thinks that its upholders are resigned to give up Christianity altogether. Against such a conclusion Strauss raises a protest. "The author," he writes, "is aware that the essence of the Christian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts. The certainty of

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* See his Autobiography, II.

this can alone give calmness and dignity to our criticism, and distinguish it from the naturalistic criticism of the last century, the design of which was, with the historical fact, to subvert also the religious truth, and which thus necessarily became frivolous." * Here again, Strauss is the ancestor of those Hegelian critics who in our days leave to philosophy and fiction the task to rebuild what they themselves have overthrown in the name of history.†

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We have exposed with some length Strauss' mythical system, because the unbelieving critics who came after him added to it nothing really essential. Nowadays, it is true, some speak of religious idealization of history, instead of myth; but after all, the result is the same, *viz.,* to deny all historical value to the narratives that refer to the childhood of Jesus, at least in as far as they bear a supernatural character. But contemporary critics are afraid to appear to be led by prejudices of a doctrinal kind, as in the time of Paulus and Strauss: this is why they pretend to abide by the study of the texts alone.

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* *Life of Jesus,* p. 30.

† "The charm of these Nativity stories does not depend on their historical truth, but on their inner significance. . . . Since all these *ideas* are true and remain true, we are not obliged to call these narratives false, even though historically speaking they are not in keeping with reality." O. HOLTZMANN, *Leben Jesu,* p. 68.

On the other hand, and precisely for that reason, their task is more difficult than some fifty years ago, owing to the recent reverse of sentiment in behalf of the traditional dates, as regards the composition of the Gospels. How can we explain that within so few years the Christian legend came to be formed, and especially succeeded in being accepted? Renan who depends on Strauss to a large extent, although he is not unwilling now and then to borrow from Paulus, thought that the working out of which the "ideal legend" originated, took place during the thirty or twenty years which followed immediately the death of Jesus. Even, he adds, during His lifetime, some may have begun to ask themselves if He was not born of a Virgin; at all events, those who looked upon Him as the Messias must have held for certain, even then, that He was born at Bethlehem. *

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* *Life of Jesus* (transl. by Charles E. Wilbour, New York, 1881), pp. 40, 218.

These conjectures have since appeared more worthy of a novelist than of a critic. It is to the texts themselves, to their history and contents, that scholars nowadays have recourse, there to seek for the means of gainsaying the truth of the narratives which those texts contain. What processes they use for that purpose, we shall tell our readers; for the time being, our only aim will be to grasp and set forth accurately the view of our adversaries.

According to Professor P. W. Schmiedel, most probably no mention of the supernatural conception was made in the primitive writing, of which the author of the first Gospel made use in composing his first chapters. This document-source began certainly with the genealogy (MATT. I $^{1-17}$), which was joined immediately with the subject-matter of the second chapter; and it is precisely to weld more closely the section about the virginal conception (I $^{18-25}$) with a genealogy which set forth Joseph as the father of Jesus, that Matt. I ^{16} came later on to be gradually modified. The earliest reading of that verse was probably: "Jacob begot Joseph and Joseph begot Jesus"; but the actual reading, now commonly received, "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus" was adopted, after passing through an intermediary reading "Jacob begot Joseph and Joseph, to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused, begot Jesus." This last reading, moreover, is attested by the Syriac version recently found at Sinai. *

The text of the third Gospel is still more embarrassing, because of the detailed precision of the message brought to Mary by the Angel Gabriel. Harnack has at last succeeded in getting the better of it, by making use of a process which has not even the merit of novelty: as he cannot unravel the Gordian knot, he simply cuts it.† Luke probably borrowed from Matthew (I $^{18-25}$) the idea of the supernatural conception, which he introduced, by means of I $^{34, 35}$, into the

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* *Encyclopædia Biblica,* Vol. III, Col. 2962.

† *Zu Luc* I ^{34} in the *Zeitschrift für die neutest. Wissenschaft,* 1901, p. 53; Hillmann and Schmiedel admit also that insertion, which Conybeare calls "a pious fraud." On the contrary, A. HILGENFELD, *Die Geburts und Kindheits-Geschichte Jesu,* refutes Harnack's arguments in the *Zeitschrift für wissensch. Theologie,* 1901, pp. 184, 222; cf. 313-317. J. HAECKE, *Die Jungfrauen-Geburt und das N. T.,* has recently taken up the whole question in the same review, 1906, pp. 18-26.—In Loisy's eyes, Harnack has raised rather than answered the question. *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. relig.,* 1903, p. 292. Likewise H. GUNKEL, *Zum religions-geschicht. Verständnis des N. T.,* sees no reason why LUKE I $^{34, 35}$ should be deemed an interpolation.

Judæo-Christian document he was using. According to Harnack, the insertion of these two verses seems to be the work of St. Luke himself; other critics, however, prefer to see in it the work of a reviser who came after the Evangelist: they claim to have found witnesses of the primitive reading of the text. Before the 3d century, the followers of a certain Theodotus quoted Luke (1 [35]) against the belief in Christ's supernatural conception, and this fact cannot be reconciled with the hypothesis of the actual reading which favors manifestly that belief. Now a MS. of the oldest Latin translation of the Gospels, instead of the words "How shall this be since I know not man?" has the words that are read in verse 38 "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word." *

This addition necessarily called for another; *i. e.,* the incidental phrase, (3 [23]) "Being, *as was supposed,* the son of Joseph." Hence, according to these critics, the primitive document used by St. Luke set forth Jesus merely as invested with the Messianic calling, even when still in His Mother's womb, just as John had been invested with his calling of Precursor. H. Holtzmann goes even farther: in his eyes, two documents may be distinguished in the third Gospel: (2^{51-52})—the circumcision, the presentation and Jesus in the midst of the doctors—would be of Ebionite origin; whilst the first part, (1 and 2^{1-20})—the annunciation both of Jesus and of John, the nativity—is inspired mostly by the idea of the supernatural conception. Luke then idealized an Ebionite narrative.*

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* Cf. CONYBEARE, in the *Standard,* May 11, 1905.

As a result of these additions and corrections, several incoherencies necessarily crept into the actual text of the Gospels. Even though these Gospels teach explicitly the Virgin-Birth, yet all the personages who appear in the Gospel narrative, even Mary, speak and act as if Jesus was the son of Joseph, the carpenter. His brethren, nay His Mother first do not believe in Him: an attitude which cannot be accounted for, had His infancy been accompanied with all the wonders actually recorded. That conviction endured so long that it inspired an apocryphal writing of the end of the 2d century,* in which the Apostle Thomas is represented as the twin-brother of Jesus. The *Gospel of Nicodemus,* or in other words the *Acts of Pilate,* seems to have been written from the same point of view. The judges of Jesus taunt Him for being born of adultery; and the author merely repels the charge, by saying that Joseph and Mary were joined in legitimate wedlock.

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* Cf. *Hand-Comm. zum N. T., Die Synoptiker,* pp. 37-44. P. W. Schmiedel also admits that the first two chapters of Luke lack unity, and holds as probable that the second is older than the first; we may even suppose, he adds, that at the beginning neither Matthew nor Luke had the Gospel of the Infancy, and both, like Mark, took up their narrative with John's baptism. The discourses of Peter preserved in the *Acts* (1^{22}, 10^{37}) would make it quite sure that the Apostolic Catechesis began with the preaching of John the Baptist. Strauss (p. 95) had already brought to task the Rationalists of his time for denying the authenticity of those texts, so as to get rid more easily of their contents.

According to WELLHAUSEN, *Das Evangel. Lucae übersetzt und erklärt,* 1904, the virginal conception is not mentioned at all in the second chapter of the third Gospel, and came into the first chapter by way of addition.

Loisy thinks that this is to handle the texts in a most arbitrary fashion, and looks upon Harnack's arguments as too weak to warrant his conclusions. Personally he will not deny the literary unity of the narratives Luke and Matthew have left us, regarding the Infancy and particularly regarding the Virgin-Birth. The Evangelists pictured to themselves the things just as we do now; they believed that Jesus had been supernaturally conceived, because this was already the faith of the Church [*] This dogma, Herzog adds, had made its appearance in Christian consciousness, about the year 80: and the Gospels, in which it is recorded, date from the end of the first century.[†]

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* *Acts of Judas-Thomas.*

Then too, neither the literary unity of the narrative, nor its tone of sincerity allows us to infer the historical reality of the events, as is plainly stated by Loisy in these words: "The narratives of the childhood of Christ are for the historian only an expression and an assertion of faith in the Messiah, that faith which is affirmed at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, and transfigured the memories of the Apostles, which is also affirmed and developed in Paul, and then in the fourth Gospel. This faith is, as it were, the reply made by the generations of believers in succession, to the proposition of the Gospel of Jesus; it increases, yet remains the same, like an echo which, reverberating from mountain to mountain, becomes more sonorous the further it travels from its point of origin." [‡]

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[*] *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. relig.*, 1903, pp. 290-292.

[†] *Ibid.*, 1907, p. 121.

[‡] *The Gospel of the Church* (English translation), p. 50. This is also the stand taken by GUNKEL, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des N. T.* (1903), p. 69. The

Is the tradition recorded in the first Gospel anterior to that recorded in the third? Did the belief in Christ's supernatural conception originate in Hellenic surroundings rather than in Judæo-Christian communities? These two points, which are somewhat related, are disputed.* In

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question has already been treated from the same point of view and on the whole with similar conclusions by P. Lobstein, *Die Lehre von der übernatürl. Geburt Christi,* published originally in French in the *Revue de Théol. et de Phil.* (1890), p. 205, and recently translated into English under the title *The Virgin Birth of Christ,* 1903. This is perhaps the most complete work ever written on that subject. Since then Hillmann, *Die Kindheitsg. Jesu nach Luk.,* 1891; and Soltau, *Die Geburtsgeschichte Jesu Christi,* 1902, have also appeared.

* The dogma of the Virgin-Birth is rather of Hellenic origin, according to Hillmann, *op. cit.,* p. 231; H. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestam. Theologie,* 1897, Vol. I, p. 414; Usener, *Religionsgesch. Untersuchungen,* 1889, p. 69, and in Cheyne's *Encyclopædia Biblica,* col. 3350; Schmiedel, *ibid.,* col. 2963; B. Weiss, *The Life of Christ,* (English transl.), Vol. I, p. 229. H. Gunkel, *op. cit.,* pp. 36, 63, 70, would admit rather a Babylonian origin, whilst he insists at the same time on the tendency of Judæo-Christian surroundings to welcome that idea: a view which appeals to T. K. Cheyne in his *Bible Problems;* in fine, judging from the *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. relig.,* 1903, p. 292, A. Loisy favors the Hellenic origin.

On the contrary, A. Harnack, *H. of Dogma,* Vol. I, p. 105, cf. p. 100, and P. Lobstein, *op. cit.,* pp. 73, seq., maintain that the belief arose in Judæo-Christian surroundings, and is based above all on Isaias 7^{14}.

this conjuncture, textual criticism calls for the help of higher criticism; *i. e.,* of that criticism which is bent on determining with accuracy the sense and bearing of the contents of the texts. Depending on the comparative study of the Gospels, and, in general, of the New Testament, the scholars of whom we are speaking, feel justified in drawing the following conclusions of which I borrow the summary from Otto Pfleiderer *, because I think it expresses quite accurately the views that are now current among liberal critics.

(a) The oldest belief was that the man Jesus had been raised through adoption to the dignity of Son of God. Christians first thought that this Sonship had begun with the resurrection; this is the Christology which betrays itself in the discourses of Apostles recorded in the first chapters of the *Acts* and in the earliest writings of St. Paul.† Later on, Christ's divine *investiture* was referred to the day of His baptism, and the Christians of that time meant to convey this thought through the descent of the Holy Ghost in the

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* *The Early Christian Conception of Christ* (English transl.), 1903, pp. 16 and ff.; cf. LOISY, *The Gospel and the Church,* pp. 48-49.

† *Acts* 2^{30-36}, 5^{30-31}, 13^{33}; *Romans,* 1^{4}.

shape of a dove, and through the voice from Heaven which authoritatively presents Jesus as God's beloved Son. The Gospel of Mark does not go beyond this second step of the primitive idea. The doctrine of a God who saves the world through His Chosen One, His Lieutenant, His Christ, His Son, is borrowed from Jewish Messianism; and the latter itself was a mere expression of the theocratic idea which pervades all the Old Testament.*

(b) Over against this view and in a parallel direction, as it were, there arose gradually another view in the earliest Ethnico-Christian communities; it was spread in their midst by Paul of Tarsus, who had brought over its elements from the rabbinical schools of Palestine. He acknowledges in Jesus of Nazareth the presence of a spiritual and personal being, which existed in Heaven before He became man. The Apostle does not yet look upon Him as God, but he sees in Him the first-begotten of the Father, (His image, His own Son), the human ideal: a second Adam, who came down from Heaven, instead of being taken from the earth, as the first Adam was. He appeared in the flesh, to deliver us from sin,

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* *II Kings* 7 [18]; *Ps.* 131 [11]; *Psalms of Solomon.*

from the Law and from death. That idea, to which a few new additions are made both in the Epistle to the Colossians and in that to the Hebrews, reaches its full development in the fourth Gospel, where under the influence of Judæo-Alexandrian theosophy the Messias becomes nothing short of a divine Being incarnate. Besides, the doctrine of Christ's preëxistence does not at all consider the human origin of Jesus. Nowhere is He exhibited by St. Paul and St. John as the Son of a Virgin; nay, there are details that positively enable us to think that not a few believed that He belonged to the race of David, according to the ordinary laws of natural descendance.

(c) Later on, during the 2d century, there was a synthesis of these two views. If Christ was the Son of God before He was Man, why seek for Him a man as His father? The doctrine of the Virgin-Birth became the popular formula used by Christians to affirm His altogether divine origin. Jesus is surely the Son of God, no longer in a moral sense, nor simply because of His metaphysical being; He becomes so, even from a physical point of view, because His human generation is the work of the Holy Ghost.* According-

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* Cf. A. Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church,* p. 49.

ing to Holtzmann*, in this particular case the blending of these two views was unskilfully made: men tried to combine things that are incompatible. The synthesis apparently took place and was actually received in Ethnico-Christian surroundings, although it was prepared by Jewish writings, like the Book of Enoch and the Apocalypse of Esdras. At all events, these scholars add, the belief in the Virgin-Birth closely depends on Greek Mythology, as well as on the religious literature of the Jews; whilst it profited by the rabbinical speculations about the preëxistence of the Messias, and perhaps too by a current exegesis which applied Isaias, 7^{14}, to the Messias, it is also indebted, and greatly indebted, to the tradition of the Greeks who were wont to deify their great men and to ascribe to their heroes divine ancestry.

For Herzog this solution is altogether too complex. *His* solution can rightly claim to be, if not original, at least simple and radical.†

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* *Lehrbuch der N. T. Theologie,* 1897, Vol. I, pp. 415, 376, 381; Vol. II, p. 458.

† Those who may have read H. HOLTZMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 409-415, and SOLTAU, *Die Geburtsgeschichte Jesu Christi,* 1902, will easily acknowledge that Herzog's thesis has not even the merit of novelty.

These are its fundamental points. The Hebrew mind was adverse to the idea of virginal conception, and, as a matter of fact, that idea was never a part of the Messianic idea of the Jewish people, either in the prophetic or the apocalyptic school. "We can unhesitatingly affirm that this belief was not the work of the Judæo-Christian Church. . . . It was the product of the Hellenic mind. When the Christians of Gentile birth were told that Jesus was both the Messias and the Son of God, they did not receive these two notions exactly in the same manner. . . . True, the faithful became soon accustomed to call Jesus, *Christ*—which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew term, Messiah—but that word remained for them a mysterious and sealed formula. Such was not the case with the title, *Son of God.* On this subject the Christians who were born in Heathenism gave free scope to their imagination. On hearing that Jesus, the Savior of the World, was also the Son of God, those men who had been brought up, from their infancy, in the legends of Paganism, could not but recall the poetic narratives with which their souls had been filled. Son of God! But Greece and Rome had possessed several of them. All those who had surpassed their fellowmen by their strength and power and genius, had they not surpassed them in their birth also? Leaving aside the warriors of the heroic ages, was it not a common report that Pythagoras, Plato, Scipio, Augustus had had a god for their father?" *

Evidently mythologists nowadays are not so scrupulous as Strauss: with the view to increase the number of men who were said to have been born of a woman and of a god,† they have not only dived carefully into all the classical authors, they have also consulted the literature of the Far East. It is especially in the Buddhistic books that some scholars claim to have found a certain number of specified and unquestionable cases of virgin-birth. Quite recently Albert Edmunds has published a book on this topic:‡ in his eyes the Christian dogma was borrowed from some

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* *La Conception Virginale du Christ,* in the *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. Relig.,* 1907, pp. 121-123. Besides the author admits that Christians later on appealed to the text of Isaias 7 14, which they misunderstood.

† Cf. P. Rohrbach, *Geboren von der Jungfrau,* 1898.

‡ *Buddhist and Christian Gospels,* Tokyo, 1905.

On the same subject our readers may be referred to Seydel, *Evangelium von Jesu,* 1882; *Buddhalegende,* 1884; *Das älteste Evangelium,* 1897. W. Bousset, *Theolog. Rundschau,* Feb. 1899, has shown the "partial and even outlandish" character of those publications.

Eastern religion; and, probably, the Buddhistic legend of Queen Maya, who saw in a dream Buddha entering her womb in the shape of a white elephant, there to become incarnate, is at the basis of Luke's narrative. Finally, the author is inclined to appeal rather to Persia, as it seems that the Avesta is exceptionally rich on the subject of virgin-mothers.

Besides, an Anglican Canon of Rochester, Professor T. K. Cheyne, aimed in a sensational book, at diffusing among the public at large the radical conclusions of the German critical school against the historical authority of the Gospel of the Infancy.* At the same time, another Oxford scholar, Fred. Conybeare, sent to *The Standard* a most bitter denunciation of the traditional sentiment regarding Christ's Virgin-Birth.† How disastrous such examples coming from high places were, became soon manifest. One of the most alarming symptoms of that destructible influence is the declaration published at the beginning of 1906 by one hundred and one members of the Anglican clergy, and signed by almost two thousand clergymen both in England and the United States.* Now, one of the topics for which free inquiry is claimed, is precisely the historical character of the narrative about the conception of Jesus.

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* *Bible Problems,* 1905; and with the same tendencies Beeby, *Doctrinal Significance of a Miraculous Birth,* in the *Hibbert Journal,* Octob., 1903. A similar attempt to vulgarize in France the same conclusions has been made by Guignebert, *Manuel d'Hist. Ancienne du Christianisme, Les Origines,* 1906, pp. 163-169.

† *The Standard,* May 11, 1905, p. 5. This article has been summed up in French by Abbé Houtin, *La Question Biblique au XXème Siècle,* ch. xiii, in a tone which, to say the least, is offensive to Christian faith.

These bold views, it is true, have called forth refutations, chiefly to America, from conservative Protestants.† The most solid is perhaps that of

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* *A Declaration on Biblical Criticism by 1725 Clergymen of the Anglican Communion, etc.,* edited by H. HANDLEY, M. A., March 1906.

† The authority of the Gospel of the Infancy, especially as to what pertains to Christ's Virgin-Birth, has been maintained among Protestants (a) in English-speaking countries, by A. WRIGHT, *A Synopsis of the Gospels in Greek,* 1903, Introd., p. xli; GORE, *Dissertations on Subjects connected with the Incarnation,* pp. 12-40, and also in his *Bampton Lectures,* 1891, p. 78; then too in *Church Times,* 1902, Dec. 24; 1903, Feb. 6; in *Christian World,* 1901, Dec. 26, etc.; SWETE, *The Apostles' Creed,* ch. iv; W. RAMSAY, *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?,* 1898; RANDOLPH, *The Virgin Birth of Our Lord,* 1903; SANDAY, *The Virgin Birth of Our Lord J. C.,* in the *Christian World Pulpit,* Feb. 4, 1903; *Outlines of the Life of Christ,* 1905, p. 191; *The Standard,* May 16, 1905; *The Daily Mail,* August 1 and 8,

Dr. Briggs,* the purport of which is that the belief in Christ's Virgin-Birth is above historical criticism; and although the Christian Church should not strike out this article of her Creed, she is not bound, on the other hand, to present it as essential to the faith and to the religious life of individuals. He concludes by saying that believers

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1905; KNOWLING, *Our Lord's Virgin Birth and the Criticism of to-day,* 1903; MACKEN, in *Princeton Theolog. Review,* 1906, pp. 37-81; COOKE, in *Methodist Review,* 1906, pp. 248-261; JAMES ORR, *The Virgin Birth of Christ,* 1907. In the *American Journal of Theology,* a symposium has been opened on this subject, January, 1906, pp. 1-30: it begins with an article by WARFIELD, whose conclusion is that the Virgin-Birth is demanded by the work of Christ. The same review had already given, July and October, 1902, two articles of T. ALLEN HOBEN, *The Virgin Birth.*

(b) In Germany, by HASE, *Geschichte Jesu* (1891 ed.), p. 280, he refutes the objections raised by Strauss, but partly admits the mythological explanation; RESCH, *Das Kindheitsevangelium,* 1897; HILGENFELD, *loc. cit.;* ZAHN, *Das Apost. Symb.,* 1893, p. 57; *Das Evangel. des Matthäus,* 1905, p. 66; GRUTZMACHER, *Die Jungfraugeburt,* 1906.

(c) In France—or rather in French—by GODET, *Comment. sur S. Luc,* Vol. I, pp. 186-196 (English translation from the second French edition, N. Y., 1881, pp. 41-104); *Introd. au N. T.,* 1900, Vol. II, p. 483; ROEHRICH, *La Composition des Evangiles,* 1897, pp. 81-89; BOVON, *Théologie du N. T.,* p. 214.

* *North American Review,* June, 1906, *"Criticism and the Dogma of the Virgin Birth."*

are free to refuse a positive assent to this dogma and especially to decline to defend it in the field of controversy.

Until these last years, Catholics had not been led to treat the subject from an apologetic point of view; recent attacks, however, have prompted them to publish, in rapid succession, several studies on this topic. Some of these studies make it their chief point to prove that the first two chapters of St. Matthew and of St. Luke deserve, just as well as the other parts of the Gospels, to be looked upon as history and indeed truthful history; the others show how arbitrary and even impossible are the explanations given by mythologists.*

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* J. M. LAGRANGE, in the *Revue Biblique,* 1895, p. 160; *Le Récit de l'Enfance de Jésus dans S. Luc., ibid.,* 1899, p. 618; 1906, p. 502; V. ROSE, *Etudes sur les Evangiles,* p. 39, (English transl., p. 41); M. LEPIN, *Jésus, Messie et Fils de Dieu,* 1906, 3d edit., p. 55, and in the *Dict. de la Bible* (Vigouroux), Vol. IV, col. 1386, 1414; V. McNABB, *St. Mark's Witness to the Virgin Birth,* in the *Journal of Theological Studies,* April 1907; E. MANGENOT, *La Conception Virginale de Jésus,* in the *Revue de l'Institut Cath. de Paris,* May-June 1907; L. DE GRANDMAISON, *La Conception Virginale du Christ,* in the *Etudes,* May 20, 1907, p 503; O. BARDENHEWER, *Die Geburt Christi aus der Jungfrau und die moderne Theologie,* in *Monatsblätter für den Katholischen Religionsunterricht,* 1907, pp. 84-91; S. PROTIN, *La Conception Virginale du Christ,* in the *Revue Augustin.,*

We have just set forth all that has been urged by independent critics against the Gospel of the Infancy; and we have not consciously lessened in any way the point and cogency either of each one of their objections taken separately or of all taken as a whole. This we had to do, were it merely to force our opponents to give up once for all the ever ready but stale accusation that Catholic apologists hide from the public the true state and bearing of those questions.* That believers should not take alarm at all that display of erudition, and still less be overawed by the self-confident boldness of the negations, a somewhat close and accurate study of the problems will sufficiently prove.

July 15, 1907, p. 5; E. VACANDARD, *Saint Marc et la Conception Virginale,* in the *Revue Prat. d'Apolog.,* July 1907, p. 412; P. CAMUSET, *ibid.,* Sept. 1, 1907, p. 701; H. LESÊTRE, *La Vierge Mère,* in the *Revue du Clergé Francais,* July 15, 1907, p. 113.

* The same charge is made by Abbé Houtin, *op. cit.,* p. 242, note 1, when, speaking of these objections, he writes "that now theologians are almost the only ones who do not know them, because they are unwilling to know them." *He* knows them indeed, but it is easy to see he has drawn his knowledge from newspapers.

CHAPTER IV.

DETAILED CRITICISM OF THE TEXT OF THE GOSPELS

Shocked by the supernatural character of the narratives about the origin of Jesus, independent critics first thought that the best means for them to subdue, as it were, these embarrassing texts, was flatly to deny their authentic character. Some writers—who are openly boasting that they accept only well-ascertained facts—are not slow to discredit *beforehand* the Gospel of the Infancy. They look on it as a latter addition. Why? Because St. Matthew and St. Luke *must* have begun, like St. Mark, with the preaching of John the Baptist.*

Strauss has already treated this conjecture as it deserves, when he writes † that it is an "uncritical assumption." True, the copy of St. Matthew adopted by the Ebionites began with the preaching of John the Baptist; but St. Epiphanius, who gives us this information, adds that they had done away with the foregoing verses, because these verses were plainly opposed to their own views regarding Christ's human generation.* Then too, he observes that the moderate followers of this sect, those whom he calls Nazarenes, made use of a text that was most complete; the only point he does not know is whether or not they have retained the initial genealogy, which descends from Abraham down to Christ.† What follows is still more significant. The same St. Epiphanius assures us that Cerinthus and Carpocrates appealed to the genealogy of St. Matthew, as a proof that Jesus had been begotten by Joseph.‡ Again we learn from Eusebius that the Judaizer Synmachus did the same.§ St. Jerome also tells us that the first chapters of St.

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* J. Haecker, *Die Jungfrauen-Geburt und das N. T. in the Zeitschr. für wissenchaf. Theologie,* 1906, p. 26, starts frankly his inquiry about the origin of the belief in the Virgin-birth, by rejecting *a priori* the supernatural explanation, because it implies a miracle. Cf. Renan, *Life of Jesus,* Introduction.

† *Life of Jesus,* p. 95.

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* *Παρακόψαντες γὰρ παρὰ τῷ Ματθαίῳ γενεαλογίας, ἀρχονται τὴν ἀρχὴν ποιεῖσθαι, ὡς προεῖπον, λέγοντες, ὅτι 'Εγένετο, φησίν, ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου.* ..*Adv. Hæres.*, xxx, 14; cf. 13.

† *Adv. Hæres.*, xxix, 9. St. Epiphanius mentions that difference of attitude as a sample of the inconsistency of the Ebionites.

‡ *Ibid.*, xxx, 14.

§ *Hist. Eccl.*, vi, 17. True, the meaning of Eusebius is equivocal; Rufinus, Nicephorus and others adopt the meaning we give in the text; Henry of Valois rejects that interpretation, but it is easy to see how intricate his own explanations are. (MIGNE, *P. G.*, xx, col. 559.)

Matthew were contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.*

Whatever may be the value of these testimonies owing to the distance of the witnesses from the events themselves, if they are used at all, they must be wholly retained. There is no 2d or 3d century text that allows us to affirm that, at the beginning, the first Gospel did not contain the first two chapters. All the information respecting this point dates from the 4th century, and tells us of subtraction, not of addition. Tatian's *Diatessaron,* which belongs to the 2d century, passes by the genealogy of St. Matthew, simply because that omission is quite in keeping with the method of the author: his purpose is not to give the whole text of the Four Gospels, but to compose a narrative of the life of Jesus, drawn literally from the canonical writings. Again, the genealogy of St. Luke also is absent from the Diatessaron, and yet, to my knowledge, nobody has ever argued from that fact, that Tatian was unacquainted with that genealogy or excluded it as unauthentic.*

**De Viris Ill.,* iii; *Comment. in Matt.,* ii, 5, 15, 23; *in Isaiam,* xi, 1; cf. ZAHN, *Geschichte des Neutest. Kanons,* ii, 1891, p. 686, whose conclusions have nothing to fear at all from their *a priori* and most unsatisfactory criticism by E. HENNECKE, *Neutest. Apokrypyhen,* 1904, pp. 15, 17.

Some have observed that in several MSS. the eighteenth verse of St. Matthew's first chapter begins with uncial letters, or again with letters written in red lead: even several of those MSS. have at that verse these words: *"Incipit evangelium secundum Matthæum."* † Is this not a trace of the primitive condition of the texts when the Gospel began with the words: *"Christi autem generatio* . . . "? This fact has been accounted for satisfactorily. It is quite probable that in several churches the genealogy was not a part of the public reading; so that as far as the liturgical usage was concerned, the first Gospel began with the narrative of the Nativity.‡

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* The copy of the Arabian translation, to be found in the Vatican Library, gives the two genealogies at the end of the codex. Cf. CIASCA, *Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmonia Arabice,* Rome, 1888; Preface.

† For instance, Y and Z, according to J. Wordsworth; these two Latin MSS. are comparatively recent, and date from the 7th and 8th centuries.

‡ Judging from the tone of the text, does it not seem as if St. Luke's Gospel originally began with the third chapter? And yet we know from the prologue, placed at the head of the first chapter, that the third Gospel has always been as it is now.

Again, even supposing—which we do not believe—that the genealogy was a kind of prologue subsequently added to the work of the Evangelist, the attitude of the first Gospel toward Christ's supernatural conception would remain unchanged, since it is in the following section (1 $^{18-25}$), that His birth from the Holy Ghost is explicitly stated.

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As a matter of fact, almost all scholars now grant that the Gospel of the Infancy, as related in St. Matthew, makes up a perfectly connected literary whole. Did we wish to disjoint it, we would be obliged to do away with a certain number of transitions that can hardly be ascribed to an interpolator.* This being the case, the attack is directed against the homogeneous character of the contents; the unity of that piece, we are told, is merely exterior and superficial; we have here two documents of different ages and meanings, placed side by side. In order that the narrative might be welded more or less skillfully with the preceding genealogy, the primitive document had to be retouched, and this was actually done. In fact, the last verse of the genealogy presents, in the ancient MSS., various readings that are not without their significance, inasmuch as they imply that the text now received does not represent the original redaction.

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* Especially 1 ^{18}; 2 $^{1, 18, 19}$; 3 ^{1}. Cf. Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ,* pp. 4-7.

The chief, or rather only testimony, to which an appeal is made in behalf of this view, is a peculiar reading of the MS. of the Syriac translation of the Gospels found at Mount Sinai in 1894.* At that time, some writers, more anxious to take up arms against the dogmas of the faith than to find out and settle a critical text of the New Testament, told the public at large that an ancient record had been discovered that would upset altogether the traditional story of the origin of Jesus.† And now, after ten years' controversy, the most decided opponents of the historical character of the Gospel of the Infancy, have to confess that the discovery has left the question untouched.*

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* About that discovery, cf. the *Etudes Religieuses,* January 15, 1895, Vol. LXIX, p. 119, and JACQUIER, *Histoire des Livres du Nouveau Testament,* Vol. II, p. 496. The reader may find a good summary of the question in Holzzey, *Der Neuentdeckte Codex Syrus Sinaïticus,* Munich, 1896, pp. 52-58.

† Read, for instance, the English periodical, *The Academy,* from November 17, 1904, to June 24, 1895.

What, then, did that so-called Sinaitic version contain? The sixteenth verse of the first chapter of St. Matthew reads as follows: "Joseph, to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused, begot Jesus, who is called Christ." It is remarkable that Joseph is not called here as in the Received Text, "the husband of Mary," but "he to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused." Then a few lines below, the Angel says to him, "She *shall bring thee* forth a son" (21), and this the Evangelist also repeats, when he writes: "She brought *him* forth a son" (25). From all this we may easily ascertain the narrator's tendency; he is bent on bringing out the virginity of the mother and the legal title of the father. According to the tenor of the Jewish law, on becoming a mother the Virgin Mary gave a son to her lawful husband.

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* "When the text of Syr. sin., "Joseph, to whom was espoused Mary the virgin, begot Jesus who is called the Christ," was first made known, great surprise at such a departure from the canonical text was expressed. Some thought that we had suddenly come into possession of a text which completely changed the entire situation. In this they were mistaken. . . . Syr. sin., however, contains at the same time the canonical text of 1^{18-20}. Taken as a whole, accordingly, this recently discovered translation brings in no new era; of an older text it contains only traces, and these are overlaid by the canonical text."—P. W. SCHMIEDEL, in *Encycl. Biblica,* Vol. III, col. 2961.

Granted, some may say, the Syriac reading is orthodox, especially if the context is also taken into account; but does not that reading throw some doubts on the authenticity of the text now received? A question which at once becomes still more urgent, when we remember that there is a whole group of MSS., called Western, both Latin and Greek, which contain several various readings of this same verse, readings which waver, as it were, between the Sinaitic version and the Received Text.*

All these various readings betoken one and the same predominant purpose: the purpose to affirm always more and more explicity the virginal maternity. It is around Mary that the whole attention centres, and Joseph here appears only in the background. Nay, in order still more to emphasize the unique prerogative of the Mother, the narrator adds to her name the epithet of Virgin, which is not found in the Received Text. From that tendency which is so pronounced, and from the jerky turn of the phrase, especially in the variants of the Sinaitic type, it is easy to infer that we have before us intentional alterations and not a primitive text.

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* Cf. above, pp. 3-4 and 109.

At all events, one thing is certain: the proposition: *And Joseph begot Jesus,* is found nowhere, and yet this should be the conclusion of the genealogy, were the bond between Joseph and Jesus identical with that which exists between Jacob and Joseph.

True, F. C. Conybeare claims to have found that reading in a Greek dialogue of the 5th century, which he published in 1898, under the title *Timothy and Aquila,** but his claim rests, I think, on a very wrong interpretation of the passage. Owing to the importance of the question, we beg our readers' leave to enter into some particulars.

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The dialogue before us is a public dispute, which is supposed to have taken place between a Christian, Timothy, and a Jew, Aquila, in the great church of Alexandria, in the time of St. Cyril. It refers chiefly to the Virgin-Birth of Jesus. As the Christian had stated that Jesus "descends from Abraham according to the flesh," the Jew asks immediately for His genealogy.

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* *Anecd. Oxon. class.,* series viii, 1898.

Timothy answers, with a gentle touch of irony, that it is rather strange for Aquila, who prides himself upon knowing both the Old and the New Testament, to be unacquainted with the genealogy of Jesus. There it is that the Jew, who is anxious to show that he knows that genealogy, appeals immediately to verse 16 of the first chapter of St. Matthew: he quotes it, whilst assailing at the same time the Christian belief which he says is opposed to the words of the Gospel text itself. These are his words in this chapter of the dialogue: "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ; and Joseph begot Jesus who is called Christ, of whom we are now speaking: he (*i. e.*, the Evangelist) says [that he] begot [Him] of Mary." *

According to Conybeare, the ending words: "And Joseph begot Jesus, who is called Christ" still belong to the quotation from the Gospel, so that—as he thinks—we have here the whole original text of St. Matthew.* But, as Schmiedel rightly observed, it is improbable that a primitive redaction should have been so heavily diffuse, especially in a genealogy the wording of which is like that of a stereotyped formula. Here the words, "Jesus, called Christ, was begotten" are twice repeated. Such as it is, the phrase of the dialogue presents either a tautology or an antinomy.†

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* Ἰακὼϐ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ, τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας· ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός, καὶ Ἰωσὴφ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστόν, περὶ οὗ νῦν ὁ λόρος, φησὶν ἐγέννησεν ἐκ τῆς Μαρίας, *op. cit.*, p. 76. We give Conybeare's text, together with the typographical variants of his edition.

Any one who takes up the study of the passage brought against us, without the preconceived purpose to find in it a denial of the orthodox belief, will easily grant that Aquila's quotation stops with the first mention of the words, "who is called Christ": * what follows is but a commentary of his own invention. After recording the authentic words of the Gospel, he concludes: "*This amounts to say* that Joseph begot Jesus, Him of whom we are speaking; the Evangelist says that he begot Him from Mary." † In that interpretation he as-signs to Joseph the chief part in Christ's generation. Timothy, who recognizes at once the abuse his opponent makes of St. Matthew's text, replies immediately: "Thou must make thy quotations accurately (ὀρθῶς, *as is becoming*) and in order (καὶ κατὰ τάξιν), as we do ourselves, when we bring forward the Old Testament, for instance: "There is in the hand of the Lord a cup full of wine, and He inclines it on this and on that side." * If thou dost strive to pass by something, we notice it; now this is what is written"; and then the Christian quotes the whole genealogy as found in our text of St. Matthew, with this difference, however, that at verse 16, instead of "the husband of Mary" (ἄνδρα Μαρίας), he uses words like those used in the MSS. of the so-called Ferrara group, and says: "he to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused."

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* *Op. cit.*, p. 76, and in the Introduction. Still more recently Conybeare has brought his view before the public both in the *Hibbert Journal,* 1902, i, p. 96, and in the *Standard,* May 11, 1905.

† *Encyl. Biblica,* Vol. III, col. 2961. On the other hand, Schmiedel's explanation can hardly also be admitted. The author of the dialogue, we are told, depended on a text of the first Gospel, in which a corrector, perhaps a mere copyist, combined the two readings: first, the one which still remains in the Received Text, then the *primitive* redaction, *'Ιωσὴφ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν 'Ιησοῦν.* This is surely a groundless conjecture; nay, it is opposed to the rest of the dialogue in which the Christian quotes twice Matthew (1 ^{16}) precisely according to the Received Text, although he does not rebuke the Jew for having put forward an inauthentic quotation.

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* To those unfamiliar with Conybeare's mental habits, it may prove of some benefit to recall a few words of the appreciation passed recently upon him by Sanday, the eminent Oxford professor: "It is characteristic of Mr. Conybeare's method that only the eccentric and the abnormal appear to have any weight with him. He says nothing whatever as to the evidence for the belief of the main body of the Church; and yet no fact is too slight or too fantastic or too remote for him, if only it seems to make against the orthodox belief." It is almost unnecessary to say that, according to Abbé Houtin, Conybeare is *the* impartial critic, one who takes only texts and facts into account. . . . Cf. *La Question Biblique au XXème siècle*, pp. 241, 242, 245, 247, 249.

† We translate *καὶ* by *this amounts to say,* because that explanatory particle has often that meaning, both in classical Greek, and even in this dialogue of *Timothy and Aquila,* p. 81, last line. In our interpretation, which we believe is the right one, the quotation stops with the words ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός, and the phrase is punctuated as follows: Ἰακὼβ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ, τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός· [καὶ Ἰωσὴφ ἐγένηνσεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστὸν, περὶ οὗ νῦν ὁ λόρος· φησίν· ἐγέννσεν ἐκ τής Μαρίας]. All that follows the quotation is, as was said already, a commentary made up by the Jew.

After a digression about the Old Testament prophecies and symbols that refer to the Virgin-Mother, Timothy recites a second time the genealogy of the first Gospel, and here again the wording of verse 16 agrees with the Received Text.*

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* Judging from the quotation of Ps. 74^{9}, given literally according to *LXX,* Timothy apparently means to say that a text should be given in full, in order that the right side, as it were, may counterbalance the left.

To resume: the Jew Aquila thinks that, from Matthew, I 16, as we have it now, he may legitimately infer that Jesus is the descendant of Joseph, by way of generation. The Christian Timothy replies that, in order to draw that conclusion, one must separate this verse from its context. And it is precisely that context which gives him the right to smooth some expressions, unless he was acquainted with some Greek copies, the text of which had already been influenced by an apologetical exegesis.†

Now, as to our conclusion, all the various readings of Matthew, I 16, that are known to us, may be derived from the Received Text, and therefore there is no reason why we should look upon any of them as authentic.‡ Since their wording, as we think, conveys an orthodox meaning, they cannot represent Jesus as the son of Joseph, whatever account may be given of the origin and bearing of His genealogy.* In the present state of the question, we must affirm and maintain, in the name of sound criticism, that the reading of the Received Text is the primitive one. First of all it is attested by all the texts and translations, except those few witnesses we have just quoted and discussed;† and rightly it is maintained in all of the critical editions of the New Testament. Then we must not lose sight of a rule found in all the text books of textual criticism. Generally, and unless there are proofs to the contrary, one is justified to hold as primitive or as the earliest, the reading that is short, vague, obscure, devoid of any *a priori* tendency and preoccupation, rather than those readings which are more developed, more precise and distinct, more decidedly favorable to doctrinal views, especially if these views refer to a topic that was formerly disputed. Is this not the case of Matthew, I [16], when compared with its variants?

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* Only with this difference, which brings out still more the apologetical tendency of the whole passage, instead of "the husband of Mary," he says: "who was espoused to Mary": instead of "who is called Christ," he says: "Christ, the Son of God."

† These are also the conclusions of C. Burkitt. Cf. *Evangelion da-mepharreshe,* 1904, Vol. II, p. 265. Then, too, J. R. WILKINSON had immediately answered Conybeare, in the *Hibbert Journal,* 1903, p. 354.

‡ Cf. these various readings above, pp. 3-4 and 109.

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* These various solutions are well given by Sanday in HASTINGS' *Dictionary of the Bible,* Vol. II, p. 645.

† The reader may observe that all these variants are found in the MSS. that form the so-called Western group. Formerly little attention was paid to that group, owing to the strange character of its departures from the reading of other MSS.; but within the last few years it has been praised, precisely on account of that feature.

As soon as the Virgin-Birth became a subject of controversy, the orthodox were sure to encounter difficulties arising from a genealogy which connects Christ with David's family through Joseph. True, Mary's name is mentioned; but so also are the names of Thamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bethsabee. This is why Cerinthus, Carpocrates, and perhaps Symmachus confidently appealed to the Gospel according to St. Matthew in support of their views regarding the origin of Jesus according to the flesh: they had merely to follow the same line of argument as that followed by the Jew in the dialogue of *Timothy and Aquila.*

That here and there the text has been replaced by the orthodox commentary, based indeed on the text and on the traditional sentiment, is easily accounted for: we know of other cases where the same proceeding was adopted. However, such attempts were few, nor did they succeed in supplanting the primitive reading.

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As found in St. Luke, the narrative of the Infancy carries with itself the proofs of its authenticity. The style of that narrative flows with such limpidity that it conveys that impression of freshness we experience in contact with the sources and earliest records of a fact. Can we imagine a literary piece more homogeneous and better connected than these first two chapters? According to Renan, the delight which St. Luke felt in writing his Gospel shall never be sufficiently realized.* If that saying of the French scholar is true to any degree, it applies preëminently to the passage in question. As a matter of fact, nobody as yet had ever thought of denying its primitive character and unity. Marcion himself did not feel bold enough to make a selection, and dropped the whole narrative out of his text. Those who tell us of this fact give us also the motives by which he was prompted. Gnostic and docetist as he was, he denied to Christ any human birth, and therefore was inclined to get rid of His genealogy and of a narrative which recorded His birth from a woman.†

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* "It is the most beautiful book there is. The pleasure that the author must have had in writing it will never be sufficiently understood." (*The Gospels,* p. 148.)

† St. Irenaeus, *Contra Hæres.,* I, xxvii, 2; xii, 7, 12; Tertull., *Adv. Marc.,* i, 1; ix, 2; St. Epiphanius, *Hæres.,*

It was reserved for contemporary critics to get hold of the text of St. Luke and then to tear it to pieces. They openly start with a hypothesis which gradually assumes in their eyes the value of an undisputed fact: the primitive Church *must* have been Ebionitic; therefore her belief of the origin of Jesus cannot have been the belief recorded in the text of the third Gospel ($1\text{-}2^{20}$), which is so manifestly full of the idea of a supernatural conception. Hence it follows that this portion of the narrative does not represent the earliest stage of Christian thought. On the contrary, the second part ($2^{21\text{-}52}$), where we see the Child of Joseph and Mary submit to the law of Moses, and grow under the influence of divine grace, most probably can rightly claim to be the older and may be considered a fragment of Judæo-Christian literature.

I, 3, II. Besides, from internal criticism it is easy to ascertain that the text of Marcion was mutilated and that our text was not formed out of his own text, by means of addition. Cf. PLUMMER, *The Gospel according to St. Luke,* 1900, 3d edit., pp. lxix-lxx. As we saw before, SCHMIEDEL feels inclined to repeat Marcion's attempt, whilst HARNACK, *Sitzungsber. der Kais.-Preuss. Acad. der Wiss.,* 1900, p. 538, maintains that the two chapters, taken as a whole, come from St. Luke.

All this is an assertion which is perfectly arbitrary and to which nothing in the text, neither the substance nor the style, gives any support whatever. No difference in style between the so-called sections can be noticed. The second section, which we are told is the older, supports, on the contrary, the first, as may be easily seen by comparing 2^{21} with 1^{31}. The Evangelist observes that on the day of its circumcision the Child was called Jesus, "a name which was so called by the Angel before He was conceived in the womb" of His mother: but this is meaningless, if not taken in connection with the Angel's words, found in the first chapter: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." * In several other places, particularly 1^{80} and 2^{40}, 1^{67-79} and 2^{25-39}, the similarity is just as striking. The whole narrative breathes one and the same spirit: even in the second part Mary holds the chief place.† If we were to take into account Jewish customs, that

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* Schmiedel discards most unceremoniously that comparison which deals a severe blow to his theory. "This backward reference to 1^{31} can easily have been inserted when the two chapters were being joined together." (*Encycl. Biblica,* Vol. III, col. 2960.)

† Cf. $2^{34, 48, 51}$.

precedence ascribed to a woman is unaccountable, were Mary an ordinary mother. I leave aside, for the time being, the intimate character of the details supplied by the Gospel of the Infancy, a character which justifies us to associate the narrative of those details with the witness of the very persons most interested in all those happenings: we shall take up this subject later.

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Some more perspicacious and apparently unbiased critics, whilst granting the literary unity of the passage, as a whole, think that, in order to remove from it the idea of the Virgin-Birth we have merely to suppress verses 34 and 35 of the first chapter: "And Mary said to the Angel: 'How shall this be, since I know not man?' And the Angel answered and said to her: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore the Holy One that is to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'" This parenthesis probably did not belong to the primitive record made use of by the third Evangelist. Besides, the same critics grant that it may have been introduced by St. Luke himself or by an interpolator.

Nothing short of most conclusive reasons must prompt one to lay hands on a text the authenticity of which had as yet remained unquestioned. Those given by Harnack may be grouped under three headings: peculiarities of dialect, a break in the narrative, a contradictory attitude of personages who are introduced in these two verses.*

1—Should we ask Harnack to hold as doubtful all the Biblical and classical passages in which we come across a term that is not found in another part of the work, he would certainly charge us with overstraining his thought. Hence we shall not insist, convinced as we are, that he himself sets but little value on his first suggestion.†

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* *Zu Lc* i, 34, in *Zeitsch. für die neutestam. Wissenschaft,* 1901, p. 53.

† The verses in question contain the particles ἐπεί and διό. Now ἐπεί is not found elsewhere in St. Luke, 7[1] can be questioned. As to διό, it is read another time in the third Gospel, 7[7]; and Harnack questions its authenticity, because that particle is missing in several testimonies. This suggestion has seemed so weak that all the critical editions retain here διό as authentic, and rightly so. Yet, Harnack still continues to have some misgivings. "Owing to the constancy exhibited by St. Luke's Gospel in the use of the particles," he says, "the presence of διό in the verses in question (1[35], 7[7]) can only surprise us: as to ἐπεὶ, it reveals unmistakably its origin." But Harnack knew in 1901 that δι is found ten times in the *Acts of the Apostles:* and

2—Is there truly an unnatural disconnection between verse 31 and verse 36, as a consequence of the so-called interpolation? I have to confess that in spite of all of my efforts I cannot see that disconnection. It would be just as fair to say that Zachary's answer, at verse 18, has been disjointed from the words of the Angel, found at verse 13. Did not verses 34 and 35 figure actually in the text, the exigencies of the narrative might justify us to suppose that they might be suppressed; but we need not have recourse to any hypothesis: the contested passage does actually belong to the text, and there is no reason whatever why it should be removed. There is only one testimony, and to my mind a most insufficient and inconclusive testimony, that might throw some doubts on the passage in question, *viz.*, the testimony of a Latin MS., of the 6th century, which, owing to a mistake of the copyist, has verse 38 instead of verse 34, so that the former is given twice.* This

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all know that the scholarly critic has recently published a book, to show that the third Gospel and the *Acts* come from the same author, and that this author is Luke the physician. Cf. *Lukas der Arzt,* 1906. (English translation, New York, 1907.)

* This is *b,* cod. veronensis, edited in MIGNE, *P. L.,* xii, 506. Cf. TISCHENDORF, *Nov. Test.,* edit. 8*a* maj., 1869. Those critical editions, which retain only important variants, do not even mention this variant.

would be indeed to overestimate altogether an isolated MS., of which the archetype is to be sought among those copies St. Jerome deemed of no account, as we know by his words to Pope Damasus: *"Apud nos"* (Latins) *"mixta sunt omnia."* *

We are told that verse 35, far from being a development of what precedes, introduces a new explanation and thus seems to contradict verses 31 and 32: it is no longer question of a Savior, the heir of the House of David, His Father, but of the Son of God, conceived through the operation of the Holy Ghost.—To make the difficulty somewhat plausible, it would not have been out of place to tell us why a Son of David could not a few lines later be represented as the Son of God. Then, too, from this point of view, verse 35 adds nothing to verse 32, as David's heir is already called "the Son of the Most High." True, the supernatural conception is not mentioned before verse 35. No wonder, for this second explanation is called for by Mary's question: *"Quomodo fiet istud, quoniam virum non cognosco?"* To insist and say that, from the very wording of this same verse 35, Jesus is called the Son of God, precisely because He is to be supernaturally conceived, is to suggest another difficulty which has nothing to do with the authentic character of verses 34 and 35, and which we shall consider later on.

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* The whole passage deserves to be given in full: "Si enim latinis exemplaribus fides est adhibenda, respondeant quibus: tot enim sunt exemplaria pæne quot codices . . . ea quæ vel a vitiosis interpretibus male edita, vel a præsumptoribus imperitis emendata perversius, *vel a librariis dormitantibus aut addita sunt, aut mutata corrigimus.* . . . Unde accidit ut apud nos mixta sint omnia." (MIGNE, *P. L.*, xxix, 526-528).

According to Harnack, Mary's question (v. 34) is *a priori* incredible. She asks *how* the Angel's prediction can be fulfilled. Mary is espoused and she certainly contemplates marriage. Under these conditions the promise of maternity is not at all perplexing, since so far no mention of a virginal conception has been made.—Catholic interpreters have always answered the difficulty by saying that, in spite of her betrothal and wedding, Mary intended to remain a virgin. In our eyes this explanation is the true one; still it is but fair to observe that some Protestant scholars do not deem it necessary to uphold the *a priori* probable character of the question expressed in verse 34.*

Loisy himself has no relish for the quick proceedings of those critics who issue a decree of inauthenticity against Luke I [34, 35]. "Harnack," he writes, "seems to mind too little the words 'I know not man.' Even though they might be intended only to prepare the Angel's answer, they must be something else than an unimportant and untimely artificial process of redaction. The question is not if an actually married woman could wonder at becoming a mother, but if the writer of this passage could believe that Mary could wonder. He has drawn up the question in keeping with his own ideas of Mary's relations with her husband, and he would have expressed that question in some other way, had the assertion "I know not man" been as preposterous from his point of view as it appears to Harnack. The natural meaning of those words is that which has been ascribed to them by Catholic tradition: Mary's objection has any sense at all, only if her marriage has taken place, and yet has not been consummated, and it is most probable that the Evangelist himself thus understood it." *

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* Cf. PLUMMER, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 24.

Again, we are told that another proof of the interpolation of verses 34 and 35 may be found in the words of the Angel regarding Elizabeth,

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* *Revue d'Hist. et de Litt. religieuses,* 1903, p. 291.

in verses 36 and 37. These words have no meaning, only if nothing as yet has been said of virginal conception through the working of the Holy Ghost; the fact of Elizabeth becoming a mother in her old age can serve as a sign of Jesus' Messianic dignity, but not of His virginal conception. A miracle of a lower order cannot be the token of a miracle of a higher order; the more so, that to all appearances, verse 37, "Nothing is impossible to God," must be understood of the case of Elizabeth only.

Let us abide by the text alone. Its obvious meaning, that suggested by a mere reading and confirmed by a deeper study, amounts to this: there is an intended parallelism between the two conceptions, that of Elizabeth and that of Mary; besides, the former, of which Mary is going to ascertain in a few days the reality, must serve to her as a proof that, according to the words of the Angel, the latter will take place also. Of course, the fact of a woman becoming pregnant in her old age does not, in itself, conclusively prove that a virgin will become a mother; hence the Angel adds immediately that "nothing is impossible to God." If these words refer to the pregnancy of Elizabeth only, they are inappropriate. Why should divine "omnipotence" be invoked for the realization of a prodigy which is by no means uncommon in Jewish history? Sara, Anna, and Manue's wife became mothers in similar circumstances. Nay, that intervention of divine grace was deemed so frequent that the Psalmist chose it as an instance of Yahweh's mercy,

> "Who maketh the barren woman to keep house,
> And to be a joyful mother of children."*

We would upset indeed the leading thought of the whole narrative of the Annunciation in St. Luke, did we suppose that, according to him, the power of the Holy Ghost shone less in Jesus' conception than in that of John the Baptist. And yet they are driven to uphold this paradox, who deny the virginal conception, strictly so called. Elizabeth needs divine grace to become a mother, whilst Mary can claim to conceive and bring forth without any special intervention from God. For the Evangelist, there is manifestly nothing common between a "late born" child, and Jesus born of Mary through the action of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, it need hardly be observed that the words of consent uttered by Mary: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me, according to thy word" are neither a prayer nor a thanksgiving, but an act of *submission* to the will of God. To what does she submit? To the honor of becoming the mother of the Messias? No interpreter has as yet dreamt of that explanation. Without even the shadow of doubt, Mary consents to become a mother, since it is the will of God, even though she had already planned her life otherwise. Thus understood, verse 38 implies verse 34, which some declare unauthentic.*

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* *Ps.* 113^{9} (Heb.)

Again there is another improbability which we are told was introduced into the primitive text, when it was interpolated: Zachary was punished for saying to the Angel: How can I know the truth of what you announce? On the other hand,

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* Regarding the Hebrew phraseology of the two contested verses, I [34, 35], the reader may be referred to G. H. Box, *The Gospel Narrative of Nativity and the Alleged Influence of Heathen Ideas,* in ZNTW, 1905, p. 92.

P. Feine's motto, quoted by LAGRANGE, *Revue Biblique,* 1895, p. 176, is most appropriate: "To do away with these two verses (I [34, 35]) is to remove the jewel and to leave the setting." CONYBEARE, in the *Guardian,* March 1903, insists on the fact that LUKE I [34, 35] is not given in the apocryphal writing, the *Protevangelium of James,* xi; but the reply has been made that these two verses are implicitly contained in the words of the Angel, xi, 2. Cf. KNOWLING, *The Virgin Birth,* p. 94.

Mary is praised for her faith (1 ^{45}), although she also utters a word of mistrust.—Mary's question implies no mistrust; it does not betoken even surprise. Why should an affianced bride wonder at the words with which Gabriel addresses her: *"Ecce concipies et paries filium"?* But she expresses the wish to be told about a particular point which she has the right to know. As she intends to remain a virgin, Mary fails to see distinctly how she can become the mother of the Messias.*

3—Harnack thinks that Mary's question is not in keeping with her character. In all that narrative Mary's distinctive feature is a silent attitude: she makes no answer to Elizabeth, nor to the shepherds, nor to Simeon, nor to Jesus Himself: she merely buries in her heart, as it were, what she hears. But in this case, on the contrary, she is so bold as to reply to the Angel: How shall this take place?—The objection supposes that the *Magnificat* was not said by Mary, and starts from this denial as from an established principle. Some ten years ago the attribution of that Canticle became an object of dispute, and now in the judgment of many, that dispute must be settled according to the traditional view. It is almost unnecessary for us to observe that some scholars draw rather hasty conclusions and are very little exacting indeed as regards proofs.* Again, Mary suddenly ceases to abide by her attitude of silence, simply because she answers in five words the most extraordinary message! But then, why not suppress 1 [38], "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord," and also 2 [48]? Then indeed, she would be silent!

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* "She does not ask for *proof*, as Zacharias did (verse 18); and only in the form of the words does she ask as to the mode of accomplishment. Her utterance is little more than an involuntary expression of amazement: *non dubitantis sed admirantis* (Grotius). In contrasting her with Zacharias, Ambrose says, *Haec jam de negotio tractat; ille adhuc de nuntio dubitat.* It is clear that she does not doubt the fact promised, nor for a moment suppose that her child is to be the child of Joseph." PLUMMER, *loc. cit.*, p. 24.

These, then, are the reasons by which some scholars of no mean reputation feel justified in reaching the following conclusions—*(a)* in the earlier narrative of the third Gospel there was no mention of the virginal conception; *(b)* the incidental phrase ὡς ἐνομίζετο, *as was supposed,* is an addition demanded by the interpolated verses 34 and 35: *(c)* hence it follows that the epithet παρθένος, *virgo,* which is read twice in 27 may be set aside, and that the word ἐμνηστευμένη, *betrothed,* has in this last passage the same meaning as in 2^{25}, where it is merely a useless addition joined to γυναικί, *wife.**

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* Cf. above, p. 17.

The reader may now judge of what remains of those three assertions.

Conybeare has made an attempt to give an historical confirmation to what we may not improperly style, quibbles based on the study of the text itself of St. Luke; but it must be confessed that he has not been successful.† Theodotus the tanner—whose testimony some modestly pretend to have unearthed and revealed to the world—Theodotus the tanner, I say, did not appeal to the third Gospel (1^{35}) to question Christ's virginal conception—which he probably admitted—but to deny His divinity. The Angel, he used to observe, said: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," not: "shall be in thee." The text of St. Epiphanius is within easy reach, and all may convince themselves that this author—the only one who enters into details about the texts alleged by Theodotus—understood thus the error of the tanner of Byzantium, and especially his attitude regarding 1^{35}.‡

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* USENER, in *Encycl. Biblica.,* Vol. III, col. 3349.

† *The Standard,* May 11, 1905.

‡ ST. EPIPHAN., *Adv. Hær.,* I, liv, 3. Cf. SALMON, in the *Dict. of Christ. Biography,* Vol. IV, p. 979; and especially J. TIXERONT, *Histoire des Dogmes,* Vol. I, *La Théologie Anténicéenne,* p. 311.

True, in the *Acts of Pilate* (the Gospel of Nicodemus), the friends of Jesus do not appeal to the fact of His miraculous conception to shield Him from the slander of the Jews; but this is simply because the author supposes His friends as yet unacquainted with that mystery. Besides, had they actually known it, it would have been for them a policy of elementary common sense not to bring forward a reason of this kind before the Sanhedrin or before Pilate's tribunal. This time at least, the apocryphal writing has remained, contrary to its custom, within the limits of plausibility.

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In their attempts to throw doubt on the primitive character of the Gospel of the Infancy, some critics insist on the fact that it is absent from the text of St. Mark, which represents the earliest type of the Gospel narrative.

Scholars generally grant that the second Gospel follows the primitive catechesis more closely than the others do: a statement to which the words of the Presbyter in Papias contribute a few more precise and particular details as to the catechesis of Peter.

Now, the primitive catechesis, as made known through the writings of St. Paul, dwelt on those facts of the Savior's life which relate more especially to the work of salvation He had come to accomplish in this world: His baptism, preaching, miracles, above all His passion and resurrection.* Were the silence of Mark on this point a proof of ignorance, why should we not say also that all that he knows of the Savior's life is only what he relates about it?—a consequence which even the most advanced critics may hesitate to draw. Is it plausible that Christians should have waited until the last quarter of the first century to make inquiries regarding the origin and infancy of Jesus? That the information on that topic remained in the background of the thoughts of the Apostles, that it was a subject of private conversation rather than of preaching, that not all the details enjoyed at once and universally all the credit sufficient that they might be received without any reserve, we readily grant: but that the narratives of Matthew and Luke arose and became actually received within the space of a few years, which intervene between the second Gospel on one hand, and the first and third Gospels on the other, cannot be held.

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* Just after the Ascension, St. Peter describes graphically in a few words the qualities of the disciple it is fit to choose for the preaching of the Gospel instead of the traitor Judas: he must be a witness of Christ's *public life.* "Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection." *Acts* I $^{21-22}$.

But we may offer more than an indirect answer. Is the idea of Jesus' supernatural birth altogether absent from the second Gospel? We can hardly believe it. Whilst the three other Evangelists speak of Joseph and do not hesitate to call him the father of Jesus, Mark has nothing at all to say about the Virgin's husband; for him Jesus is the "Son of Mary."* This is indeed a noteworthy detail, and the more we think of it, the more easily do we become convinced that as the second Evangelist did not relate in what way the Son of God had been made one of us, he watched most closely over his expressions, so as to say nothing that might lead astray or even merely shock the faithful.

Again, it may be that the insistence with which St. Mark calls Jesus "the Son of God," † must be looked upon as an allusion to the fact of His Virgin-Birth.* True, St. Mark speaks twice of the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus;† but St. Matthew and St. Luke, who mention expressly His mother's virginity, use the same expression.‡ Besides, that circumstance, which is an argument against Mary's perpetual virginity, has nothing to do with the miraculous birth of our Lord.§

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* Mark 6^{3}.

† Mark $1^{1, 11}$, $3^{11\ (12)}$; 5^{7}; $9^{7\ (6)}$; 14^{61}; 15^{39}.

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* Cf. McNabb, O. P., *St. Mark's Witness to the Virgin Birth,* in the *Journal of Theological Studies,* April 1907; and also E. Vacandard, in the *Revue Pratique d'Apologétique,* 1907, Vol. IV, p. 412.

† 6 ^{3}; 3 ^{32}.

‡ Matt. 12 ^{46}; Luke 8 ^{20}.

§ Unless some account is made of a Gnostic writing of the 2d century, the *Acts of Thomas,* in which the Apostle Judas-Thomas is called once, perhaps twice, "the twin of the Lord." Cf. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,* Vol. II, p. 180 (1871); M. Bonnet, *Suppl. cod. apocr.,* ii, p. 148 (Greek text, edit. 1903), and E. Hennecke, *Neutest. Apokryphen,* p. 493 (German transl., 1904). If we set aside that rather strange and merely incidental appellation, nothing is left from that long-drawn novel—it is divided into thirteen acts—to give us any hint that Thomas is the Lord's twin. He is usually called the Apostle, the disciple, the servant, the slave of Jesus, and he himself has certainly no suspicion of that relationship, when he says: "I am not Jesus, but the servant of Jesus; I am not the Messias, but one of those who minister in his presence; I am not the Son of God, but I pray that I may be found worthy of God." Cf. Bonnet, ii, 270. True, Jesus calls

In the Gospel according to St. Mark, Mary is apparently unacquainted with the great destiny of her Son: which cannot be accounted for if the Angel Gabriel really spoke to her in the words related by St. Luke (1^{30-37}). At the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, like His brethren,

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him "His brother," but then this appellation has just the same bearing as in the Gospels (Matt. 12^{49}, 25^{40}, 28^{10}, and corresponding passages in the other Evangelists.) Th. Zahn (*Forschungen,* vi, p. 348) thinks we have to do "with a mere fancy, that could originate only from one who denied the extraordinary prerogative of Jesus' generation." Personally I believe that the whole story may be accounted for by a local popular legend. That legend belongs to the Syrians who give very often to Thomas the name of Judas (Euseb., H. E., i, 13, Ἰούδας ὁ καὶ Θωμᾶς) and seems to be founded (*a*) on the etymology of Thomas, *called* Δίδυμος; cf. John 11^{16}, 20^{24}. In the *Clementine Homilies,* ii, 1, the name of his twin, Eliezer, is given; (*b*) on the supernatural power by means of which the Apostle of India can assume at times the physical features of Jesus, or *vice versa,* so that the Lord says to the son-in-law of King Gundaphoros: "I am not Judas, who also is Thomas; I am his brother." (Cf. Bonnet, ii, p. 116.) Those legends, far from having any regard for history, do not aim even at consistency. In another story, a twin sister, named Lydia, is ascribed to Thomas. Perhaps the last echo of the legend of Thomas as the twin of the Lord is found in Priscillian, edit. Schepss, *Corp. script. eccl. latin., Vindob.,* 1889, p. 44. "*Judas* apostolus clamans *ille didymus Domini";* and yet Priscillian holds Christ's Virgin-Birth. (*Ibid.,* p. 36.)

she does not believe in Him; nay, on one occasion she joins them to get hold of Him, thinking "that He was beside Himself," in the words of St. Mark.*

In this objection several points, which are at least doubtful, are looked upon as certain; particularly the similarity between the two verses just quoted.† However, even supposing we make all possible concessions. Mary may have joined the company of her relatives, worried as she was at the thought of the dangers to which her divine Son was exposing Himself: the indiscreet assiduity of the crowds often did not leave Him time even to eat, and the Pharisees were already showing their jealousy of the young wonder-worker.* Even though St. Luke tells us expressly that Mary knew beforehand from the lips of an Angel, the Messianic destiny of Jesus, still he observes that "His father and mother were marvelling" at what

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* 31$^{21, 31}$.

† MARK 3^{21} says *οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ*, ***sui:*** does this refer to the relatives of Jesus or to some of His disciples? *ὅτι ἐξέστη*, *quoniam in furorem versus est:* are these words to be taken literally or with a grain of allowance, as containing a hyperbole? Besides, "they do not say that Jesus is out of His mind, for the word used by the Evangelist has not in the New Testament that definite meaning, and serves to designate any outburst of surprise, of wonder, of awe, of enthusiasm; but they do believe that He is in a state of mystical excitement, which deprives Him of the proper sense of life and of His own condition." LOISY, in the *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. relig.*, 1904, p. 439.—Ἔλεγον, *dicebant:* is this a remark of the crowd or of those who were jealous of Jesus, or of His kindred? And if it comes from the last mentioned, do they speak through conviction or merely in order to excuse Jesus before His enemies? Above all, are the kindred of the Lord, referred to in verse 21, to be identified with those called His "brethren" in verse 31?—So many disputed, and some, rightly disputed questions. We may abide by the sentiment of Maldonatus, *in Marc.* 3^{21}, who looks upon verses 21 and 31 as parallel, and yet even after accepting that hypothesis

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does not hold that Mary shared the view of those who say ὅτι ἔξεστη.—According to HERZOG, *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. relig.*, 1907, p. 129, *Matt.* 12^{46}, and LUKE 8^{19}, suppress on purpose the remark ὅτί ἔξεστη, and thus "they have left on the text of Mark a scar that cannot but strike the eyes." The difficulty is entitled to some consideration, if the opponent admits the primitive character of the second Gospel; but I strongly suspect Herzog of holding Loisy's actual view (in the same *Revue*, 1903, p. 513), according to which our canonical Mark is not a primitive document. If that is the case and if the second Evangelist has also made use of a written source, on what grounds can we hold that he found ὅτι ἔξεστη in his document and reproduced it? He may have added it so as to usher in what immediately follows in his text: *Quoniam Beelzebub habet;* and so, far from "leaving a scar on the text of Mark," Matthew and Luke would be nearer to the primitive document than he is himself.

* MARK 3^{20-22}.

was said in His regard.* In the same Gospel, Mary asks her Son the reasons of His conduct, the first time He takes up openly the work of His Father; St. Luke does not hesitate to add that His parents "did not understand the word which He spoke to them."† Hence his would be indeed a poor psychological sense, who would be puzzled at the fact that Mary was surprised, in proportion as she gradually witnessed the wonders that had been foretold her. The description of an event or of an object, made to us beforehand, does not preclude feelings of admiration nor of awe from arising in our souls, the first time that event or that object comes actually under our eyes; and this is true especially of prophecies, the subject of which remains more or less obscure until their fulfilment becomes a fact of experience. In fine, he has failed to read into a mother's heart, who wonders at the feelings which the Blessed Virgin experiences, when she beholds the gradual unfolding of the drama which will take Jesus to Calvary. Christ's mother, supernaturally enlightened, in all their details, about all the events which are to make up the life of her Son, and then unfeelingly, with dry eyes, contemplating their actual occurrence, would be a type worthy of the Apocryphal Gospels.

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* *Luke* 2 33.

† *Luke* 2 49-50.

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St. John does not seem to have paid any attention to the human origin of Jesus, nor had he to take it into account, since his purpose was to write down the Gospel of the Incarnate *Word.* His silence on this point is explained in the same way as in the other points, when his text is compared with that of the Synoptics. True, several New Testament theologians look upon the Incarnation as being, in the Johannine Christology, the equivalent of the supernatural conception; but it does not suffice to build and propose abstract theories; they must also be based on texts and history.* We shall take up this subject later.

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* According to H. HOLTZMANN, *Lehrbuch der neutestam. Theologie*, ii, 419, we should infer from JOHN 1^{45}, 6^{42}, 7^{28}, that, in the eyes of the fourth Evangelist, Jesus was born like other men. To these passages we may oppose the following, 1^{14}, 3^{13}, $6^{38, 44, 51, 62}$, $8^{38, 46, 58}$, 10^{28-31}, 11^{25}, which are much better understood in the hypothesis of the Virginal conception. Cf. A. CARR, *The Testimony of St. John on the Virgin Birth of Our Lord*, in *The Expositor*, April, 1907, p. 311; and *The Virgin Birth in St. John's Gospel,* in *The Expository Times,* 1907, Vol. XVIII, p. 521.

Even granting it is real, St. John's silence rather confirms the traditional faith. "It is beyond all doubt that the author of the fourth Gospel knew the Gospel of St. Matthew and St. Luke. If his belief had been contrary to that of the two writers of the 'Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus,' why, we ask, did he not emphatically assert his own faith in opposition to the new dogma which was beginning to creep into the churches? Would silence have sufficed to vindicate his orthodoxy? Are we not justified, then, in interpreting the silence of St. John as really favorable to our thesis and in believing that St. John accepted unreservedly the fact of the supernatural birth?" *

Besides, we may add that, far from being left aside, that truth is probably expressed in the fourth Gospel. Contemporary critics take into account a variant discovered in the Prologue of St. John (1 [13]), which so far had remained almost unnoticed. The Received Text reads: "Who not from blood, nor from the desire of the flesh, nor from the will of man, *but from God were born.*" Now, most of the writers of the 2d century read in the last member of the phrase: *"but from God was born,"* and these words they refer, not to the birth of the faithful to the supernatural life, but to the temporal birth of the Word of God. True, Tertullian is the only one who explicitly holds that reading; but St. Justin, St. Irenæus and perhaps St. Hippolytus seem, on various occasions, to imply it and even to quote it. In the present state of the question, we may say that St. John probably referred in that passage to the most undefiled source from which the Word become man drew its human life.*

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* Rose, *Studies on the Gospels,* p. 60.

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* The reading *ὃς ἐγεννήθη*, (instead of *οἳ ἐγεννήθησαν*) is supported by the authority of TERTULL., *De Carne Christi*, c. xix and xxiv; ST. IREN., *Adv. Hæres.*, III, xxvi, 2; xix, 2; xxi, 5, 6; V, i, 3; the codex veron. (*b*) and perhaps D; ST. JUSTIN, *Apolog.* i, 32; *Dialog.*, 54, 61, 63, 76, 84; ST. HIPPOLYTUS, *Ref. Hær.*, vi, 9; cf. ST. AUGUST., *Confess.*, VII, ix, 2. Nay, St. Ignatius of Antioch seems to quote John 1 ^{13} and to insinuate the reading *ὃς ἐγεννήθη*, in the luminous formula of the virginal conception, which he gives at the beginning of his letter to the Christians of Smyrna. Cf. LOISY, *Le Quatrième Evangile*, p. 166, note. Nowadays, that reading is held as certain or at least as probable by RESCH, *Kindheitsevangelium* in *Texte und Untersuch.* (HARNACK), x, 3, pp. 88, 89, 249, 250; LOISY, *Le Quatrième Evangile*, p. 177-180, although he does not look upon it as an allusion to the virginal conception; ROSE, *Studies on the Gospels*, p. 61. Others dismiss it as a textual alteration: TH. CALMES, *Rev. Bibl.*, 1900, p. 394; WESTCOTT-HORT, *The New Test. in the Original Greek*, Appendix, p. 74; HOLTZMANN, *Handcomm. zum N. T.*, Vol. IV ^{2}, p. 34; RÉVILLE, *Le Quatrième Evangile*, 1902, p.

The well-known Anglican Bishop and scholar, Dr. Gore, has suggested another consideration which is not without some importance. All know that Cerinthus was St. John's opponent; nay, it was in order to counteract the effect of his preaching, that the Apostle made up his mind to write the fourth Gospel. Now, Cerinthus denied the reality of the Incarnation of the Divine Word, and consequently the supernatural birth of Jesus. According to Rose, this argument is not conclusive. "We give this argument as merely probable," he says, "it has not, in our judgment, that certainty which is sometimes attributed to it. No doubt Cerinthus, denying the reality of the Incarnation did assign to Jesus a purely human origin, but this is only of secondary importance after all, since the Incarnation is not founded upon the miraculous Conception, and does not actually require it. The Apostle's object principally was to establish that the union of the Word with the human nature was substantial, and he might, therefore, have left the question of the miraculous birth unconsidered." *

102, note; however, our readers may observe that these last two writers frankly declare that they deny the primitive character of this variant, precisely because it witnesses in behalf of Christ's supernatural conception.

* Gore, *Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation,* p. 8; Rose, *Studies on the Gospels,* p. 62.

If, like the author we have just quoted, we consider the question merely from a speculative point of view and take into account only what is absolutely possible, the objection raised against Gore's view cannot be answered. But is this truly the way in which the question must be put? In the dispute between St. John and Cerinthus, was not the supernatural conception of Jesus bound up *de facto* with the Incarnation of the Word, so that to deny one point implied also, as a consequence, the rejection of the other? That this was the way in which things occurred actually in Asia, is suggested by the texts of St. Ignatius and of St. Irenæus, already quoted; the argument upon which the latter grounds Christ's divinity is especially significant and worth noticing.*

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Now, we have examined all the Gospel passages to which our opponents appeal to uphold their denial of the primitive character of the

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* Cf. above pp. 61-62, and HARNACK, *History of Dogma,* Vol. II, pp. 275, ff. The reader may find in RESCH, *Kindheitsevangelium,* pp. 243-255, a suggestive comparison between the Gospel of the Infancy and the prologue of the Gospel according to St. John.

Christian belief in the Virgin-Mother. The reader may judge whether or not we were right, when, at the end of the preceding chapter, we said that whilst all that display of erudition can impress those who witness it at a distance, they who examine it more closely come soon to realize that it is a mere scare-crow.

CHAPTER V.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE GOSPELS AND THE OTHER PARTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

ALTHOUGH St. Paul mentions nowhere expressly Christ's supernatural Conception, yet nothing whatever can justify us to say that he is ignorant of it, and still less can we say that he denies it.* On the contrary, his Christology agrees much better with that hypothesis: nay, there may be in some of his Epistles, for instance in that to the Galatians, several texts that actually imply it. With the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth before our eyes, we fully account for the Apostle's idea of the Heavenly origin of Jesus and His unparalleled holiness.

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*As is done by Reuss, Meyer, Sabatier, Weizsäcker, Pfleiderer, Lobstein, Holtzmann and others.

The reserve, or—if you prefer—the silence of Paul about the way in which the Son of God came into this world, is no puzzle for those who remember that all through his Epistles, which make up one-third of the New Testament, he retains but a few facts of Jesus' earthly life: the Eucharist, the death on the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension. It is only in the way of allusion that the Apostle refers briefly to what concerns the ministry of John,* the preaching and the miracles of the Lord.

The Epistles are addressed to a certain number of Christians, who are supposed to know the essential facts and teachings of the Gospel: they are no mere repetition of the cathechesis by which they have been preceded.

On the other hand, we cannot suppose that the Apostle was unacquainted with the Gospel of the Infancy, related in detail by his disciple. Even setting aside the testimony of tradition, which affirms the existence of personal relations between Paul and Luke, the study of the texts alone suffices to show the close connection between the Epistles, on one hand, and the third Gospel and the Acts, on the other.*

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* Once, at Antioch of Pisidia, he explicitly mentions the ministry of the Baptist, *Acts* 13 [24-25]. The analysis of that discourse enables us to ascertain that, in his catechesis, St. Paul followed the method of the Apostles: Cf. *Acts* 2 [14-36]; 3 [12-26]; 7 [1-53].

Most ecclesiastical writers of old saw a rather definite statement of the Virgin-Birth in the Epistle to the Galatians (4^{4}), where St. Paul says of Christ that He was *born,* literally "that He was *made* of a woman." † Modern commentators are less positive; the most confident of them believe that, if the supernatural Conception is here formulated, it is rather as a mere suggestion, as a hint, that can be understood only by those who believe already in the mystery. By using that language, they say, the Apostle may have meant to designate only the reality of Christ's human nature, with an allusion to *Genesis* (3^{15}), and oppose beforehand the Valentinians and the Docetæ, who gradually came to deny that Jesus had taken a true body in the womb of the Virgin

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* Tertull., *Adv. Marc.,* iv, 2; St. Iren., *Adv. Hær.,* x, 1; *Canon of* Muratori, lin. iii;—A. Resch, *Das Kindheitsevangelium,* pp. 264-276; A. Plummer, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke,* pp. xliii-lix; Harnack, *Luke the Physician,* pp. 1-25.

† Εξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικὸς, γενόμενον ὑπὸ' νόμον. The reader may find in Petau, *De Incarnatione Verbi,* V, xvi, the Fathers' comments on this passage; that of St. Irenæus, III, xxii, 1, is especially remarkable.

Mary. At all events, they add, the Biblical expression, "Begotten of woman" γεννητὸς γυναικός, which seems so similar to that which we read here in St. Paul, γενόμενος ἐκ γυναικός, is a mere paraphrase, equivalent to ἄνθρωπος, *man.**

We may well ask ourselves if this change of position is not due to an excessive timidity in face of the denials of liberal scholars.† For, after all, there is a difference between the poetical Hebrew idiom "son of woman" and the peculiar expression "Born of woman," which is used nowhere else, not even by St. Paul. The LXX had translated by γεννητός γυναικός the Hebrew *ialoud ishsha,* which refers to what is most infirm and weak and defiled in the fruit of the woman, and this shade of meaning may not be absent from the text of St. Matthew (11 ^{11}), in which the native lowliness of the man contrasts easily with the glory of the prophetical calling. That St. Paul's aim is to emphasize the reality of Christ's human nature, let it be granted; but why does he use so typical an expression, when he had at his disposal that of γεννητὸς γυναικός, so familiar to all? We can hardly believe that this is an unimportant detail of grammar, especially under the pen of a writer who, in keeping with Jewish notions, was most probably reluctant to dwell on the maternal generation. Is it not more natural to suppose that the Apostle meant to insinuate that Christ's relation to His mother was of a most uncommon and unique kind? *

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* Job 14^{1}; Matt. 11^{11}.

† "Traditional commentators see in the qualificative γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός an allusion to the supernatural conception of Jesus in the womb of a virgin, *i. e.,* without man's coöperation. In this they are greatly mistaken. Not only is this idea absent from the text, but even it is explicitly opposed by the thought that is in the text. The being born of a woman is here called thus, in order not to be distinguished from other men, but rather to be likened to them." A Sabatier, *L'Apôtre Paul,* 3d edit., pp. 415-416. (The English translation was made from the 2d French edition and does not contain the appendix from which those words are quoted.)

Protestant interpreters dispute among themselves as to whether or not the Virgin-Birth is a necessary corollary of the Pauline teaching on the redemption. Whilst A. Sabatier holds the negative, Godet claims that as St. Paul bases

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* In the expression, γενόμενος ἐκ γυναικὸς, the particle ἐκ may signify the adequate material cause, just as in a somewhat forgotten passage, *I Cor.*, 11 ^{12}, where we read, with a manifest allusion to *Gen.*, 2 ^{23}: γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, *woman taken out, made of man.* The Fathers had already observed that γυνή and παρθένος are not necessarily incompatible. Cf. St. Jerome, *Comm. in Galat.*, iv, 4; St. August., *Sermo* clxxxvi (al. xix), *De temp.*, 3.

on original sin his theological system, it follows that an innocent victim alone can atone for the guilty. As a matter of fact, this is the express view of the Apostle.* But, then, how shall we account for that *native innocence* of Christ, if His life originated from the same defiled source as the life of other men?

As we have said already, if we take the question from the point of view of mere possibility, the argument is not conclusive, for, rigorously speaking, we can suppose a sinless Christ, sanctified from His mother's womb, who, however, would have been conceived and born just like other men. But it must be confessed that this hypothesis hardly agrees with the train of thought found all through the system of St. Paul. St. Irenæus was struck by the comparison the Apostle draws between the first and the second Adam, and concludes that, just as the former was drawn from a virgin earth, so the latter must have been born of a Virgin mother.†

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* *II Cor.* 5^{21}; *Eph.* 2^{3-5}; cf. *Rom.* 12^{21}.

† *Adv. Hær.*, III, xxi, 10; V, i, 3. The same idea has been taken up by NEANDER, *Life of Jesus*, p. 17; and still more recently by Lechler, Schmid and B. Weiss.

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How can St. Paul's explicit declaration that Christ according to the flesh is the descendant of David,* agree with the belief in the virginal conception?

The same question should be asked regarding the first and third Gospels. Although they expressly declare that Joseph had nothing to do with the human generation of Jesus, St. Matthew and St. Luke hold it as certain that the Virgin's Son is truly the descendant, the heir of David, foretold by the Prophets. In this connection most authors strive to prove at length that, like Joseph, her husband, Mary belonged to the family of David. Their view can be upheld †

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* *Rom.* 1 ^{3}, 4 ^{13}, 9 ^{5}, 15 ^{12} (cf. *Apoc.* 5 ^{5}, 22 ^{16}); *Galat.* 3 ^{16}; *II Tim.* 2 ^{8}; *Acts* 13 ^{23}, where the term used by St. Paul is especially significant: σπέρμα, *seed,* being the rendering of the Hebrew *zèra.*

† On this subject the reader may be referred to PATRIZI, *De Evangeliis, III,* Diss. vi, p. 14; KEIM, *Jesus of Nazara,* Vol. II, pp. 24, ff.; DIDON, *Jesus Christ,* Vol. II, pp. 430-432. ST. JUSTIN, *Dialog.,* 43, 45, 100; ST. IRENÆUS, III, xxi, 5; the Protevangelium of James, x; the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary; the Sinaitic version of the Gospels, LUKE 2 ^{5}, hold that Mary belonged to the house of David; ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Cons. Evang., II,* 1, even says that no other view can be held. Commentators usually treat the question in connection with LUKE 1 ^{27}. Cf. O. BARDENHEWER, *Mariä Verkündigung,* in *Biblische Studien,* Vol. X, 1905, 5th fasc., pp. 74-82.

—we grant—is even certain, but is it necessary and does it suffice to account for the Davidic descent of Jesus Christ, according to St. Paul's meaning? We may doubt it.

In the eyes of the Apostle, as in those of his contemporaries, he is a *Son of David,* whom the Jewish Law acknowledges as such. Now, before the Law, Joseph is really the father of Jesus, although the natural paternity is only presumed. Evidently the case of a husband whose wife conceives supernaturally was not foreseen in the Mosaic law; however, the rights of Joseph over Jesus are legally just as real as those granted by the law of the levirate; they are even more real.* From the legal point of view, which was so important among the Jews and to which alone attention was paid in genealogies, Jesus is the true descendant of Joseph, since He was born of his lawful wife and is not a child of adultery. This is why St. Matthew, and most probably St. Luke himself, connect Christ with David, through the genealogy of Joseph, His reputed father.

We need not insist especially on the terms used by St. Paul. The incidental phrase *κατὰ σάρκα*,

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* Cf. Grimm, *Die Einheit der vier Evangelien,* p. 239, and *Das Leben Jesu,* I, 122, 206; Funk, *in Zeitschrift für Kat. Theol.,* 1888, p. 657.

secundum carnem, contrasted with κατὰ πνεῦμα, *secundum spiritum,*[*] signifies human nature in all its integrity, and not merely the body of Jesus.

As man, Christ is the Son of David: but this is neither His only nor His chief dignity. Besides that prerogative, which draws its source from flesh and blood, He enjoys another, of a spiritual and heavenly kind: and through the latter, He is connected with God as an only son to his father. That passage of the Epistle to the Romans clearly sets forth what is put, in indistinct and half-concealed words, by the first three Evangelists, on the lips of Jesus Himself, on the day he asked the Pharisees whose son the Messias was to be.[†]

According to Herzog, Jesus protested, on that occasion, in the name of Holy Writ itself, against the title "Son of David" bestowed on Him by popular simplicity.[‡] In this case, even more than in others, his exegetical method, so brief and dogmatic, has led this writer to unwarranted conclusions. All grant, I suppose, that according to is actually, the Son of David. Now, when relat- the Synoptics the Messias must be and that Jesus ing the episode just referred to—and all three relate it—they have certainly no suspicion whatever that the Lord intended to deny that Davidic descent. Which shall we believe, the Evangelists or . . . Herzog?

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[*] *Rom.* 1^{4}. The text of *Acts* 2^{30}, *de fructu lumbi ejus,* is not more conclusive than those just studied. St. Peter makes use of the Hebrew phrase currently used to designate a *descendant,* an *offspring.* Then, too, there is a direct allusion to *II Kings* 7^{12}, which must literally be understood of Solomon.

[*] MATT. 22$^{41-46}$; MARK 12$^{35-38}$; LUKE 20$^{41-45}$.

[‡] *La Conception Virginale du Christ,* in the *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. relig.,* 1907, p. 119.

Likewise, the crowd who in their acclamations, used indiscriminately the terms "Messias" or "Son of David," do not see at all the meaning which some modern criticis ascribe to the question put by Jesus to the Pharisees; they are so deeply convinced of having the same thoughts as the Master, that, at that very moment, as we read in St. Mark, "they heard Him gladly."

But, then, what did Jesus mean when He asked His opponents: Whose Son is Christ? Why is it that, against their reply that the Messias is of Davidic descent, He raises the objection: "If David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?" The text of St. Mark supplies us with the answer. The crowd has just welcomed the prophet of Nazareth with the cry: * "Blessed is the kingdom

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* MARK II [10].

of your father, David, which comes!" That acclamation was a programme: Jesus is to be the Messias of whom they dream, He is to raise the throne of their father David and to lead them to the glorious revenge they must take from the oppressors of Israel. Now, that is precisely the Messianic part Jesus is unwilling to play. They are mistaken, who expect to find in the Messias David's heir only; He is to be "greater than Solomon." * His human origin does not exhaust all His dignity, it is not even its predominant feature. After all, His calling is grounded on a title far greater than His human descent, and that is why David himself calls Him his Lord.

Jesus does not infer expressly His divine Sonship, but He takes the minds of the Jews in that direction. According to Dalman, if the passage does not refer to Christ's origin, we must see in it an allusion to the Virgin-Birth.†

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* MATT. 12 ^{42}.

† *The Words of Jesus* (English translation), pp. 285. Herzog has thought it wise to place his interpretation under the authority of H. Holtzmann. In reply we might appeal to Dalman, Wendt, Meyer-Weiss, Zahn, Allen, etc. . . . the best, however, is to appeal to Holtzmann himself. True, the page quoted by Herzog (*Lehrb. der N. T. Theol.*, I, p. 244) lacks precision; but why did he not consult p. 258, and especially the same author's commentary on the

How can the Apostle give the name of offspring of Abraham and of David to Him whose father is not to be sought among the descendants of those Patriarchs? He uses these terms through one of those legal fictions, that are judicially just as effective as the relations based on nature itself. In *Deuteronomy* 25^{5}, he who was born of the *levir* is called simply the offspring (zera, *semen*) of a man who really died childless, merely because in the eyes of the law the latter is his father, even though in reality he had nothing to do with his birth.

This view of Christ's descent is not a novelty: it is met already in Origen and in St. Augustine.[*] Hence Knabenbauer has written the following words that express the same view: "St. Augus-

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Synoptic Gospels (3d edit., 1901, p. 277)? In this latter passage, the narrative of the Gospels is explicitly placed side by side with the Epistle to the Romans I^{34}. "The contrast between Christ κατὰ σάρκα = ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυείδ, and Christ κατὰ πνεῦμα = Κύριος ἡμῶν was probably present to the mind of the Evangelist." Cf. Loisy, *Le Quatrième Evangile,* p. 628. True, by ascribing apparently to a subsequent theology the doctrine suggested by the Synoptics, *loc. cit.,* Holtzmann and Loisy are more self-consistent than Herzog, who deems historical the words of Jesus related in that passage. That interpretation fitted better his thesis.

[*] Origen, *in Rom.* I^{3}; St. August., *De Cons. Evang.,* II, cap. I.

tine and Paschasius Radbert rightly hold that, for this only reason, namely the true marriage which existed between Mary and Joseph, Christ may and must be called the Son of David, even though the Virgin, His mother, would descend in no way from David." * One of St. Luke's latest Catholic commentators is less felicitous, when he claims that "Jesus could not descend from David unless His mother belonged to the royal race." † And yet, by a kind of contradiction, the same author admits a few pages after, that St. Matthew intended to prove Jesus to be the Son of David by giving St. Joseph's genealogy.‡

Not only is Mary's genealogy unnecessary to explain how through His human nature, Christ is the Son of David, but even, taken by itself, it seems unable to prove that kinship. For, after all, if we complete St. Paul by the Evangelists, it was not any descent whatever—for instance, that which a woman might enjoy—which is claimed for Christ by our texts; it is that descent which, from the historical point of view, makes Him

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* *Comment. in Evangel. Matthæi,* 1, p. 43.

† P. Girodon, *Comment. crit. et moral sur l'Evangile selon S. Luc,* p. 119.

‡ *Op. cit.,* pp. 178-185.

the heir of David, His father.* Now, among the Jews, the sceptre never devolved upon females, it was handed on from the father to one of his sons. It is then, through Joseph alone, that Jesus has the right to be held as the blessed offspring, promised to the holy King, destined to raise his house from its ruins and to sit forever on his throne.† This is why the Evangelists insist on Joseph's Davidic descent.‡

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To hold, with some plausibility, that Christ's supernatural conception remained altogether outside the horizon of St. Paul, one must prove that, in his doctrinal system, Jesus of Nazareth does not become Messias before the day of His resurrection, and that those relations with God are considered only from the theocratic point of view of the Jews, who saw in their kings Yahweh's representatives upon earth. In this case, the Christology of the Apostle would not go beyond that of Cerinthus: Jesus was first a mere man (*Ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος*), and He remained so, until the moment God *adopted* Him as His Son, by intrusting Him with the Messianic mission.

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* LUKE 1 32.

† LUKE 1 32; *Acts* 2 30, 15 16; cf. *Psalm* 131 11; AMOS 9 11.

‡ MATT. 1 20; LUKE 1 27, 2 4.

Two texts are quoted in support of that theory. In his discourse at Antioch of Pisidia,* St. Paul declared that God had fulfilled the promise made to the Patriarchs, when He raised from the dead Jesus of Nazareth; Yahweh said then to Him: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." The Apostle takes up the same idea at the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, when he writes that "he has been separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised before, by his prophets, in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was made to him of the seed of David, according to the flesh, who was *constituted the Son of God,* in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, *by his resurrection from the dead.*"†

If the interpreters, who aim at stating with accuracy the mind of St. Paul in this regard, had at their disposal only the two passages just quoted, their commentary might remain doubtful. But the Apostle is entitled, more than many other writers, not to be judged merely from four lines; of all the authors of the New Testament, he is the most prolific, and he has fitly developed in his Epistles the leading ideas of his theology. Now taking as a whole the doctrine exposed in those Epistles, it is beyond question that Jesus did not begin to be the Son of God on the day of His resurrection, nor on any other day of His mortal life. As Son of God, He existed long before He showed Himself in the midst of men. In the Christology of the Apostle, Christ's preëxistence is a fundamental point, one we must always keep before our minds, when we read the Epistles. Of course, for St. Paul, as for the Evangelists, the title, *Son of God,* is tantamount to that of "Messias"; but, because the Apostle is bent on setting forth its whole bearing, he strives to trace out the close connection which exists between these two prerogatives: Jesus is the Son of God, not because He is the Messias; on the contrary, He is the Messias because He is the Son of God; the Father gives Him a share in the salvation and government of the world, because Christ is entitled to that honor; not only does He come from God, He *is* God.

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* *Acts* 13^{33}.

† *Rom.* 1^{2-4}.

In the eyes of St. Paul, Jesus' Divine Sonship does not result from the theophanies near the banks of the Jordan or on Mt. Thabor, nor even from His supernatural conception; it is to His eternal origin that Christ owes His unique position as regards the Father. In Him we have two natures: one makes Him the Son of David, a member of the human family; the other makes Him the Son of God, unspeakably associated to the life of His Father.

That is the doctrine expressly taught in the Epistles called "of the captivity," written from the year 60 to the year 64.*

Some one may say that this group of Epistles represents a later stage of St. Paul's views regarding the person of Christ. To answer at once that objection,—which can be also directly refuted,—we shall simply remark that Christ's preëxistence is set forth quite clearly in the pages of the great Epistles, written from the year 58 to the year 60, and even a few years before, according to Harnack; most assuredly they represent the primitive Christology of the Apostle. Christ accompanied the Hebrews in their wanderings through the wilderness;† rich and innocent as He was, He became poor, and for our sakes, was willing to be treated as a culprit;* in Him the Father gives us His own Son,† a second Adam coming down from Heaven.‡ These few thoughts are the summary of those which St. Paul develops in his Epistle to the Philippians: Christ annihilated Himself, since, as by nature His was a divine condition, He assumed of His own accord the condition of a slave; by becoming one of us.§

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* Particularly *Philip.* 2^{5-12}; *Coloss.* 1^{15-21}, 2^{9}.

† *I Cor.* 10^{4}.

According to H. Holtzmann "only an exegesis, swayed by the anxious desire to find in the texts the Rationalistic conception, has led some to think that a mere ideal existence was intended here." || Again, Harnack has luminously brought out the distinction between the preëxistence claimed for Christ by St. Paul (and by St. John), on the one hand, and that kind of heavenly existence which the Jews used then to ascribe to the works of God upon earth, especially to the most excellent.¶

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* *II Cor.* 5^{21}, 8^{9}.

† *Galat.* 4^{4-5}; *Rom.* $8^{3,32}$. In *II Cor.* 4^{4}, Chirst is called *God's image,* a significant appellation, if compared with *Coloss.* 1^{15}.

‡ *I Cor.* 15^{45-48}.

§ *Philip.* 2^{6-8}; the same thought is found in *Heb.* 1.

|| *Lehrbuch der neutest. Theologie,* 1897, II, p. 82.

¶ *History of Dogma,* Vol. III, pp. 1-14.

This being the case, we must infer that St. Paul is far from looking upon Jesus of Nazareth as one who became Christ and Son of God on the day of His Resurrection. Besides, the text of his Epistle to the Romans (1^4) is not to be translated—as is done with a view to the question—but rather as follows: "*enthroned* Son of God, in [the] power [that befits Him], according to the Spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead." God the Father declares He has begotten His Christ on that day, because He then bestowed upon Him the full glory and authority which He deserves, Who is the only Son, the heir of all. For the Apostle, Jesus' resurrection is only the normal, ultimate consequence of His divine origin. This is perhaps the doctrine which is the most clearly taught in the Epistles; and this is also the doctrine set forth by St. Peter, when he states that God raised Jesus from the dead because it was impossible that hell should hold him.*

We may push still further the comparison between the Epistles of St. Paul and the discourses of St. Peter, recorded at the beginning of the book of the *Acts*. The first time that Peter announces to the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth they have recently crucified, he tells them that "God hath made Him (ἐποίησεν) both the Lord and Christ" promised to David;[*] and this he himself explains a few days after, by saying that "God hath glorified (ἐδόξασεν) His Son Jesus."[†] Elsewhere he speaks of the unction Christ has received from God;[‡] St. John does likewise, although he had expressly said before that Jesus is from the beginning, or at least before His baptism, the Incarnate Word of God.[§] When we look over these earliest attempts of Apostolic catechesis, we feel that the thought goes farther than the word, which purposely aims at being discreet and reserved.[||] For these preachers of

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* *Acts* 2^{24}.

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[*] *Ibid.*, 2^{36}.

[†] *Ibid.*, 3^{13}.

[‡] *Ibid.*, 4^{27}; 10^{38}.

[§] JOHN 1^{29-34}, 10^{36}, 1^{14}.

[||] In their first discourses to the multitudes, the Apostles are wont to call Jesus a *prophet, Christ*, a *man approved of God, holy, just*, a *child* or *servant of God* (παῖς Θεου), *David's offspring*. These words imply a kind of pedagogical adaptation. In their first contact with the Jews, who have recently rejected Jesus because He proclaimed Himself the Son of God, the Apostles are fond of using the current Messianic terminology. However, those expressions *de plano* have for their only purpose to introduce that of *Son of God*. Cf. 9^{20}, 13^{33}. The parallelism between a risen Christ, Jesus is not merely an instrument of salvation in the hands of God, Him also they proclaim "the prince of life, ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς,"* which is translated in the Vulgate by *auctorem vitæ,* expressions which St. Paul would have fully approved.

Those comparisons had to be made. Together with the discourses found in the first chapters of the *Acts,* the Epistles of St. Paul are the oldest written records of Christian tradition. Since it is there that, according to the testimony of our opponents, we must look for "the primitive and genuine sample of Apostolic preaching," history entitles us to affirm that, in the religious knowledge and equipment of the early Christians, there was room for the faith in the Virgin-Birth, so much so that, even though that belief were affirmed expressly in no part of the New Testament, still the texts themselves would favor that hypothesis.

Luke 1 [3] and *Acts* 1 [22], attempted by Corssen, Usener, and others, rests on a misunderstanding. The complete narrative which the Evangelist intends to write for the faithful is one thing, and the object of the first Apostolic catechesis, adapted to those whom the Apostles wished to convert to the faith of Jesus, is another thing.

* *Acts* 3 [15]; cf. *Heb.* 2 [10].

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In presence of these unquestionable facts, what becomes of the theory found in many books, of which the authors claim to describe the historical development of the New Testament ideas? According to the formula borrowed from Otto Pfleiderer,* the Christian dogma regarding the origin of Jesus had a threefold stage: birth according to the ordinary laws, followed by a divine adoption (at the time of the resurrection or of the baptism); miraculous birth through the action of the Holy Ghost; Incarnation of the Word of God. This is one of those fanciful hypotheses, which subsist for awhile, resting, as they do, on preconceived notions; but sooner or later they must fall, because they are not founded on texts.

At this conjuncture, our opponents, driven to their last shift, make another appeal to the Gospel of St. Mark. Why has it nothing to say about Jesus' infancy? Why does it typify His Messianic mission by the descent of the Spirit and by a heavenly voice, saying: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased?—Long before the second Gospel had been written, St. Paul preached the doctrine we have just exposed. Now to place in his Christology a Christ who is a Son of God merely by adoption, is to introduce into that Christology an awful blunder.

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* Cf. above, pp. 92-95.

Some one may say that the text of Mark reproduces an earlier catechesis, that of Peter. Granted; but how do you know that the Gospel of Paul differed from that of Peter? Once indeed—toward the year 51—this was claimed by some meddlesome Judaizers. Immediately St. Paul challenged them to a public test; he went to Jerusalem and there submitted his preaching to the control of the other Apostles. All know how the test turned to his behalf.* Had Peter and Paul stood for opposite traditions, most certainly Mark would have known it, since he had been the companion of the two Apostles.

In fine, it may be objected that at the time the second Evangelist wrote his narrative—between the year 60 and the year 70—that narrative had a mere historical value, since it was outdone by the actual faith of the Church, and especially by the theories of St. Paul.—When proposing that argument, the opponent loses sight of the fundamental principle of the school with which he is connected, namely the principle that the Gospel narrative does not portray the historical realities of the true life of Jesus, but only the impression produced by the belief in His Messianic calling, on the generation coeval with the Gospels. This is, of course, a false *postulatum:* still, it should not be overlooked by any one who has placed it at the basis of his studies on the Gospels.

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* *Gal.* 2; cf. *Acts* 15.

We are told that the Incarnation of the Word, proposed in St. John, is simply another way to account for the origin of Jesus, and thus attempts to give the same explanation as the Virgin-Birth: the synthesis of the two explanations dates from the day when the fourth Gospel succeeded in being acknowledged side by side with the Synoptics. —The assertion overlooks to such an extent the concrete manner in which Christianity arose, that such an explanation has not even the least shadow of plausibility. First of all, our opponents think that the faith of the Church was at the mercy of a literary production: the apparition of the fourth Gospel or of the Apocalypse sufficed to change its course. They forget that that faith was above all a living reality: committed by the earliest witnesses to the collective consciousness of the believers who feed and live on it, that faith, rudimentary as it may have been, is grounded on its essential elements and on the law of its development. Some limits it knows already: a book, even though bearing the name of an Apostle, does not suffice to add anything to it or to take anything from it; the living tradition has exercised a supreme control over the literary activity of the early ages.* How many apocryphal Gospels have utterly failed, when confronted with the primordial requirements of Christian dogma!

Again—and this is an important and decisive remark—long before the Gospel of the Infancy had been written by St. Matthew and St. Luke, Christians read in the Epistles of St. Paul a Christology equivalent to that of St. John. The terms differ, but the doctrine is just the same. Him, who St. John calls the "Word of God," St. Paul calls the "own Son of the Father," and where John speaks of "incarnation," there Paul speaks of "annihilation."

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* We have on this point the testimony of Papias. Cf. Funk, *Patres Apostolici,* 1901, Vol. I, p. 354.

CHAPTER VI.

POSITIVE TRUSTWORTHINESS AND HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE TEXTS CONCERNING JESUS' INFANCY.

ST. LUKE I, 2, 3 $^{23-38}$.

THE first two chapters of St. Luke partake of the authority which is ascribed to his Gospel, taken as a whole. The author begins by stating that he took carefully his information from eye-witnesses (*αὐτόπται*), from those who had first preached the Gospel of Christ. It is after taking up all these things from the very beginning, so as to control their exactness, that Luke resolves on composing a new narrative. He wishes to make it more orderly than that which exists already, and especially more fit to impart to Theophilus historical certitude as to the origin and early steps of Christianity.* In these conditions, why should we suppose that the third Evangelist began his work by recording pious legends, the spontaneous growth of religious instinct?

There is nothing in his text to prompt us to believe that he ascribes to those first narratives a special character, and sees in them a kind of prehistory of the Gospel. Christ's virginal conception; His birth at Bethlehem, where Angels reveal Him to some shepherds; the first manifestations of the divine wisdom of the Child Jesus, when, at the age of twelve, He joins in the Temple the Doctors of the Law: as many facts which the Evangelist relates in the most natural tone, just as anxious of accuracy in his statements as if he were dealing with the public life of our Lord; nay, we must confess that here the geographical and historical surroundings are much better defined than in many subsequent scenes held by all as certainly historical.

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* LUKE I $^{1-4}$.

It goes without saying, that St. Luke must have taken very special and careful information regarding those traditions on which the Apostolic catechesis was probably silent.* As he intended not to imitate St. Mark, in this regard the third Evangelist must have felt the importance of the step he was taking when beginning the Gospel history with the birth of Jesus. A close and sifting examination was necessary, the more so that, even then, fanciful and legendary narratives regarding the earthly origin of Jesus must have been current. We should, perhaps, see an allusion to those attempts at adorning, as it were, the cradle of Christ, in the first words of the prologue, in which St. Luke speaks of those "many, who have undertaken to draw up a narrative of the things which have been accomplished in our midst." Had he looked upon the work of his predecessors as altogether satisfactory, he would have given up the pretension to do better than they had done.

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* "Undoubtedly, this chapter of the Hidden Life of the Savior did not come as a part of the primitive Apostolic catechesis, as we can now reconstruct it from the *Acts of the Apostles* and from the Epistles, and as it appears more ingenuously preserved in St. Mark's Gospel: it was natural that at the beginning, attention should be paid chiefly to the redeeming work of Jesus, His public life, His suffering and resurrection. As to the recollections of the Master's infancy, which the legitimate curiosity of the faithful was soon to hold in so great account, although they were not first the subject of the ordinary and, as it were, official preaching, yet they must have been carefully stored away

Granted, some one may say, the third Evangelist intended to relate history, but did he succeed? As he lived seventy years after the events,

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within the Apostolic College and within the intimate circle of those who shared in some way or other in those early events." LEPIN, *Jésus, Messie et Fils de Dieu,* 1906, pp. 59-60. Cf. ARTHUR WRIGHT, *A Synopsis of the Gospels in Greek,* 1903, p. xlii, who, however, supposes and does not prove, that the mystery of the Virgin-Birth was revealed only towards the last days of the Apostolic Age.

how did he ascertain the truth of the facts that are exposed at length in the first two chapters of his Gospel?

Scholars generally admit that St. Luke devoted to that self-imposed task of investigation the two years of his forced stay at Cæsarea of Palestine, about the year 60. St. Paul was then imprisoned, and his companion had all the necessary leisure to travel all over Judæa and Galilee, and gather what people said about the infancy of Christ. He heard several witnesses relate what they had seen: those who had then reached an old age may have been at least twenty years old, when Jesus was born. Not all those whom the Gospel calls "the brethren of the Lord" were dead, and of course they were not overlooked by St. Luke. Many years later, during the 2d century, the faithful still surrounded their descendants with special regards, and called them *Desposyni*—i. e., the "relatives of the Lord."

That the Mother of Jesus was still living, is not at all improbable: judging from the most plausible calculations, she was then about eighty years old. At all events, there still remained in the country confidants of her thoughts. Then, too, before departing from this world, Elizabeth and Anna had said and repeated over again what they knew of the Son of Mary. Who were the privileged ones, judged worthy to hear and to witness, at the proper time, the mystery with which Jesus' cradle had been surrounded? Here we naturally recall those holy women who, according to the Gospels, followed the Savior; the usual companions of Mary, they must have come into close intimacy with her. That St. Luke had access to this circle—an access which his medical profession made still easier—is proved by his text. Long ago it has been observed that women play an important part in the third Gospel, especially in what pertains to the childhood of Jesus.

St. Matthew's narrative is conceived from the point of view of Joseph: to him the Angel of God always appears; on the contrary, all through St. Luke's narrative, the Mother of Jesus remains the chief personage of the scene: she there appears between Elizabeth and Anna, whose function it is to proclaim her great blessing and privilege. Besides Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and Mary Magdalen, both of whom are known to the three Evangelists, St. Luke mentions also Susanna, Martha, the sister of Mary, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, who was the steward of Herod the Tetrarch.* Several of the miracles recorded only in the third Gospel were wrought in behalf of women: the widow of Naim, the sinner of the seventh chapter, the woman of Magdala, the woman healed from an ailment which had afflicted her for eighteen years. Besides, there are also in the third Gospel several scenes in which women hold the foreground: the widow's mite, the parable of the unjust judge, the daughters of Jerusalem weeping over Jesus, the welcome extended to Him in the house of Martha and Mary, the woman who openly proclaims His mother blessed. The same remark has been made also about the book of the *Acts*.†

To these indications there is added a more delicate and tender touch, a peculiar blending of feelings, which tend to show that the recollections of the holy women make up one of the special sources from which St. Luke drew his material.‡ To the mother who saw and who heard we must ultimately ascribe remarks like these: "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart"; "His father and mother were marveling at the things which were spoken about Him"; "they did not understand the word which He spoke to them"; "and His mother kept all these things in her heart." *

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* That Chuza is probably the royal officer (βασιλικός) whose name is not given in St. John 4^{46-53}, who, together with his family, believed in Jesus. St. Luke shows himself well acquainted, especially with what was going on at the court of Herod: 3^{1-19}, 8^{3}, 9^{7-9}, 13^{21}, 23^{7-12}; *Acts* 13^{1}.

† Cf. 1^{14}, 5^{1}, 6^{1}, 12

‡ That is the view of Godet and Plummer, in their commentaries of St. Luke, and still more recently as to Plummer, in *Diction. of Christ,* Vol. I, p. 76; of Ramsay, was

Did it rest merely on oral traditions, the testimony of the third Evangelist would force itself already upon the historian's attention, but that is not all. From the study of his text, it has been clearly shown that the first chapters depend on an earlier document; and by this very fact his distance between the witness and the events is considerably decreased. Most critics, believers or unbelievers, admit that in these chapters we have, if not a Greek translation, at least a quite literal reproduction of a Hebrew or Arabic writing, which did not contain the genealogy of Jesus; and this is why that genealogy is given by the

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Christ born in Bethlehem? p. 88; LANGE, *Life of Christ,* Vol. I, p. 258; W. SANDAY, *The Expository Times,* April 1903, pp. 157, 297; A. HARNACK, *Luke the Physician,* 1907, p. 151, who mentions besides the witnesses appealed to by St. Luke, the daughters of Philip the Deacon, *Acts* 21 8-9.

* **LUKE** 2 19, 33, 50, 51.

third Evangelist in the third chapter. Both in its substance and in its form, the Gospel of the Infancy, in St. Luke, betrays its origin. Setting aside the fine sentence of the prologue, all the rest is written in an abrupt style and with a most decided Hebrew ring.*

Especially in the first chapter, we find so many precise details that these cannot be ascribed to merely oral information. St. Luke, who had grown up in the midst of Greek surroundings, and had received his education at Antioch or at Tarsus, was probably unfamiliar with Jewish institutions: the Temple, the worship, the Priesthood. Now, he describes all these things with the greatest ease and with the most accurate terminology. Not only does he name Zachary and his wife, Elizabeth, whom he calls a daughter of Aaron and a cousin of the Virgin Mary, but he knows that Zachary was fulfilling his functions, according to the weekly course, called of Abias; and here St. Luke uses the most technical term ἐφημερία, which, besides, he is the only one to use, out of all the New Testament writers. He is acquainted with the arrangement of the Temple, the place of the altar, the hour of incense when the priest has to go within the Holy Place, whilst the people pray without, until the ceremony is over; nay, the Evangelist seems to see the particular spot where the Angel stood:—on the right side of the altar of incense. He knows that the prophetess Anna lived only seven years with her husband, that afterward she did not remarry and that she was eighty-four years old at the time of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

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* Out of 128 verses, 72 begin with the transition καὶ, which is repeated at times in six or seven consecutive numbers. Others begin with the particle ἰδού or καὶ ἰδού, which render the Hebrew *hinnéh* or *wehinnéh.* Finally some phrases which open with καὶ ἦν, καὶ ἐγένετο, frequently recall the Biblical *wayehi.* The phenomenon is so striking that A. RESCH has attempted a new translation of that Hebrew Gospel of the Infancy in the collection *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur,* 1897, X, 3, p. 203. G. DALMAN, *The Words of Jesus* (English translation), p. 32, is inclined to see in it a primitive Aramaic substratum. A. PLUMMER, in his Commentary on St. Luke, p. 45, has carefully examined all the passages of the third Gospel and of the *Acts,* in which the phrase begins with ἐγένετο or καὶ ἐγένετο, and concludes that the comparison bespeaks the most decided Hebrew ring of the first two chapters of the Gospel. Cf. also H. CHASE, *The Gospels in the Light of Historical Criticism,* in the *Cambridge Theological Essays,* London, 1905, pp. 371-420.

That detailed description, which betrays an eyewitness, is continued to the end of the second chapter, and cannot well be accounted for, except on the hypothesis of a primitive narrative, translated or used by the author. That the genealogy given in the third chapter was likewise translated from a written document is self-evident. Even the Evangelist may have used several documents in his first two chapters: three verses (1[80], 2[40, 52]) apparently served as conclusions. If this is the case, the Greek redactor had probably at his disposal three originally distinct narratives: the Annunciation, the Nativity, and the episode of Jesus in the midst of the Doctors.

Again, we must not overrate the intimate character of the traditions related in the Gospel of the Infancy. Unless we are ready to admit that here and there we have to deal with mere literary fancies, we must grant that the rumor of those events must have gone beyond the circle of the families which were concerned in them. Zachary, struck with dumbness before the whole people; John the Baptist, born of a barren mother and of a father who was advanced in age; the cure of his father; his extraordinary life in the wilderness; the episode of the shepherds at Bethlehem; the prediction of Simeon and of the prophetess Anna, who repeated to all those she met that she had just seen the Messias promised to Israel; the scene of Jesus in the midst of the Doctors of the Law:—so many events which had been somewhat public, and which we cannot suppose were completely forgotten a few years after.

True, a thirty years' period of obscurity may have thrown somewhat into the shade those who had been the objects of so many and so great forebodings: but on the day when John, and soon after Jesus, aroused Jerusalem and Judæa, men must have remembered the past events. The remark is true especially of the shepherds of Bethlehem, called by some Angels to pay their duties to a child whose parents they do not know and whose trace they are soon to lose. The relatives of Jesus probably must have known something of the wonders that had accompanied His birth; but after and by ascertaining day by day that He was just like other children, they came to expect from Him nothing extraordinary.

"These narratives bear in themselves tokens not only of their origin, but also of their authenticity. Among those tokens, we may mention first of all the fact that in the said narratives the person and the work of the Messias are set forth in their primitive coloring, that is to say, in the features which popular imagination ascribed to the Messianic idea. "The Lord God will give Him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (1 $^{32-33}$). The same local color, the same national spirit, we find in the canticle of Zachary:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
For he has visited and wrought redemption for his people,
And raised up a horn of salvation [*i. e.,* a powerful Deliverer] for us
In the house of his servant David . . .
Salvation from the hand of our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us . . .
Being delivered out of the hand of our enemies,
We should serve him without fear."
(I 68-69, 71, 73-74) . . .

Judging from the discourses of the *Acts* and from the Epistles of St. Paul, it does not seem that, after Pentecost, the followers of Jesus, when describing the mission of the Messias, continued to use that language more or less encumbered with temporal and national elements, an inheritance from the pre-Christian tradition. On this account the document which we are now studying should be dated from the very beginnings of Christianity." *

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* LEPIN, *op. cit.,* p. 62. Rose had already made the same remark: "The historical value of these first pages of the Gospel is witnessed by the prologue by which they are preceded, and in which, as a matter of fact, the author shows himself earnest, careful and critically prudent in his investigations. On the other hand, the Messianic hope which inspired Zachary and Mary is not that of the

On what grounds are we told that faith reacted upon history? Had this been the case, the Evangelist would have placed on the lips of his personages discourses held really by the men of his own generation, and would have most probably ascribed to them the theology of St. Paul. Had not historical exigencies compelled him to set forth Jesus in His birth as poor and despised, he would have praised and glorified His cradle, whom the Apostle, his master, places at the summit of creation, even within the Divine nature itself. Prompted by the suggestions of his *faith,* St. Luke would have made, not only the Angels of Heaven, but all created nature:—men, brutes and plants—proclaim His coming into this world. These are the thoughts which actually inspired the composition of the apocryphal Gospels.

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Had not St. Luke carefully sifted and controlled the traditions that came under his knowledge, he would have left us a narrative most

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Apostolic Age. The Galilean idyl which their canticles reëcho took place but once in the historical surroundings and at the epoch which St. Luke describes." *Evangile selon S. Luc,* Traduct. et Comment., p. 18.

different from that which we find in his Gospel: to his painstaking fondness of historical reality he owes the sobriety and delicacy of description, which are, in themselves, tokens of truth. Although the *myth,* strictly so called, demands more than fifty years for its rise, and still more, of course, for its being accepted as history—especially at an epoch of literary activity, like the epoch of the Evangelists—yet we must grant that *legend,* which is merely an embellishment of reality, forestalls history, or at least closely follows on its footsteps. This is a law of the psychology of crowds, and there is no reason why we should exempt from it the formation of narratives concerning the childhood of Jesus.

True, the oldest apocryphal Gospels, that have come down to us, date at the earliest from the end of the 2d century; * but that is no sufficient reason for thinking that popular imagination began to work on the earthly origin of Jesus only after two centuries had elapsed: at an early date it must have been unwilling to grant that such an unparalleled wonder-worker had had an ordinary infancy. The Son of God could *not* have come unnoticed into this world; the God of nature must have there chosen a dwelling, as a master who means to be obeyed. Starting from that principle, any authentic word or deed of the Lord Jesus became a theme for those more or less plausible digressions, with which the apocryphal Gospels are filled. Such are the narratives we would find in the third Gospel, had its author related indiscriminately all the stories that were circulated. Now, even from a merely superficial comparison of his text with the Apocyphals, one can easily realize the distance between the supernatural that is authentic and the wonderful that owes its origin to fancy. The prodigies ascribed in those wild productions to the Child Jesus are most often improbable, and they lack almost always any moral bearing and religious aim, setting aside the case when they proceed from a wrong motive, like the desire for revenge.

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* Very few authors pay any attention at all to Conrady's fantastic theory, *Die Quelle der kanonischen Kindheitsgeschichten Jesu,* Göttingen, 1900, according to which the canonical narrative of Jesus' Infancy, in St. Matthew and St. Luke, depends on the apocryphal Gospels and especially on the *Protevangelium of James.*

We shall make here but a few comparisons.

The narrative of the Annunciation seemed too sober to the author of the *Protevangelium of James.* Whilst St. Matthew and St. Luke tell us merely that Mary was espoused to Joseph, the apocryphal is, of course, far better informed. Mary, the daughter of a wealthy Jew, spends all her childhood in the Temple, where she is fed by the hands of Angels; at the age of fourteen, she refuses to marry, because she has made up her mind to remain a virgin; nothing short of a miracle which points out her husband, the just Joseph, is necessary to make her take another decision; and that miracle is related in various ways: according to some, flowers sprang from the staff of Joseph; according to others, a dove came from the staff and rested on the head of the venerable old man. The Angel Gabriel salutes the Virgin first at the public spring of Nazareth, and then a second time in her own house, where she is weaving a purple veil for the Temple of Jerusalem.*

When recording the narrative of the Nativity, the tradition of that apocryphal assumes a grossly realistic tone. A midwife, named Salome, wishes to ascertain for herself that Mary has brought forth her child without any detriment to her virginity. Immediately she is punished for her incredulity; her hand becomes withered; she asks Mary's forgiveness, and she is cured through the contact with the Child Jesus.* How far we are here from St. Luke's sobriety, who says in one verse all that he thinks should be retained out of all the detailed narratives of the Savior's birth, that circulated.

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* *Protev. Jacobi,* i-xi.

Our canonical Gospel tells us merely that "the Child grew, and became strong, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (2 ^{40}); that "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and in grace with God and men" (2 ^{52}). This simple remark will seem very scanty to those who may have read the apocryphal Gospels. In the latter, we see the Son of Joseph displaying on any occasion His divine power; and it is chiefly in these stories, that the childishness of the wonderful deeds that are related contrasts with the wisdom and kindness of the miracles of the public life. When a child, Jesus makes birds out of clay; then, in order to justify Himself for moulding them on a Sabbath-day, He commands them to fly away, and the birds take their flight as soon as He claps His hands.* A boy who has unwillingly hurt Him falls dead.* Jesus' witty remarks give rise to complaints, so that twice Joseph has to punish Him.

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* *Protev. Jacobi,* x, xi, and *Pseudo-Matthæus,* ix.

* *Evangel. Thomæ,* ii, 2-5.

* *Ibid.,* iv, 1.

A certain teacher, named Zachæus, had offered himself to Joseph to teach his Son; but Jesus, after glancing at him, says to him: "Thou who art ignorant of the nature of A, how canst thou teach others B? Thou hypocrite! first, if thou knowest, teach A, and then we shall believe thee about B." As the master remains silent, Jesus reprimands him and then, under the pretext of revealing to him the properties of A, exposes a certain number of Gnostic theories.*

The *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy,* of a later date, draws its inspiration from a taste for wonders, which reminds us of the magical tales of the *Arabian Nights.* A youth, who had been changed into a mule, resumes his first state, when Mary places the Child Jesus on the back of the animal.† In the same apocryphal, we read how one day Jesus mingles with the Doctors of the Law; but instead of surprising them by the wisdom of His answers, He assails them with questions on the Scriptures, astronomy, medicine, physics, metaphysics, etc., and takes a wanton pleasure at perplexing them.

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* *Ibid.,* vi.

† *Evangel. Arab. Infantiæ,* xxi.

The comparison of the third Gospel with Jewish legends and Pagan myths serves also to enhance its historical character.

One of the recent commentators of St. Luke has well described the impression left in the mind by the comparison of those parts of Christian belief, which are first expressed in the Gospel of the Infancy, with the Græco-Roman mythology, or even the wonders of Jewish apocalyptic writings. "It is well to remember that there are stories, more or less analogous to what is told by the two Evangelists, in heathen mythologies. The historical probability is not weakened but strengthened by such comparisons. St. Luke's Gentile readers must have felt the unspeakable difference between the coarse impurity of imagined intercourse between mortals and divinities, in the religious legends of paganism, and the dignity and delicacy of the spiritual narrative which St. Luke laid before them. And St. Matthew's Jewish readers, if they compared his story with their own national ideas, as illustrated in the Book of Enoch (c. 6, 15, 69, 86, 106), would find a similar contrast." *

A Christian of the earliest ages of the Church,

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* A. Plummer, in *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels,* Vol. I, pp. 74-75.

recently converted from Paganism, would have wondered in the extreme, had he been told that his belief in Christ's Virgin-Birth did not really differ from the legend according to which Plato was born of Perictione and Apollo; so sure he was that, comparing the two cases, everything—witnesses, testimony and the public at large—was altogether dissimilar. From this point of view, the history of Diogenes Laertius, written more than two centuries after the events, cannot be compared at all with the Gospel of St. Luke.*

How conceive and bear the idea that, in order to express their thoughts on a preëminently chaste mystery, Christians should have had recourse to the formulas of the most repugnant and shameful lewdness:—that of the Olympian gods? All possible subtleties shall not be able to fill up the chasm between the Gospels and the Greek poetry. In the churches, where that compromise between light and darkness is supposed to have taken place quite early, the Epistles of St. Paul were read every Sunday. Now, in these Epistles, the Apostle praises the faithful for having completely cast aside the superstitions and shameful wanderings of a merely human science.*

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* That the legend about Plato's divine origin was already current during the lifetime of Speusippus, his nephew and eulogist, has not been proved. True, Diogenes Laertius, iii, 1, affirms it, but all know what to think of his accuracy.

Again, most of the comparisons that have been attempted so as to show the literary dependence of the narratives of Jesus' Infancy upon some profane texts, cannot bear a careful examination. The following instance may be added to those already given. There is a story to the effect that the mother of Augustus, when asleep in Apollo's temple, was visited by the god, in the shape of a serpent. From this Soltau infers a Greek influence upon the narrative of the Annunciation in St. Luke.† With a method like this, it would be easy to derive from one source all similar narratives, which, after all, are quite numerous.‡ We must ask ourselves whether or not we have to take as serious the view of those critics who think they have contributed something to the solution of the problem regarding the origin of Jesus, because they have most solemnly recalled that one of the titles given to Augustus was that of Son of God and Savior of the World. Truly, we are tempted to fancy that hypercriticism is destructive of the sense of fitness and of measure!

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* *Ephes.*, 5.

† *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

‡ Cf. above, pp. 77 and ff. The objection is not new; all these comparisons had been already dealt with by St. Jerome, *Adv. Jovin.*, i, 42; MIGNE, *P. L.*, xxiii, 273. For the comparisons made between the Gospel of the Infancy and the narrative concerning the birth of Buddha, the reader may be referred to a recent article by a learned professor, a specialist on this question, LOUIS DE LA VALLÉE-POUSSIN, *Le Bouddhisme et les Evangiles Canoniques*, in the *Revue Biblique*, 1906, p. 353. The author shows the weakness and arbitrary character of the thesis that affirms

Far from appealing to a Jew, the dogma of the Virgin-Birth raised objections in his mind, as may be seen from the lengthy and detailed dispute on this subject between Trypho and St. Justin. This is a point which will be treated later on, in connection with St. Matthew's narrative. That circumstance is actually one of the chief reasons that have been advanced to prove that the idea of Jesus' supernatural conception

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that the Evangelical narrative was borrowed from the Buddhistic story, as was recently maintained, especially by ALBERT J. EDMUNDS, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels,* 1904; moreover, one of his friends, he tells us, is soon to publish a more complete study of the question, both from the Biblical and from the Buddhistic point of view. As to the so-called virgin-birth of Moses, all know that this is but a rabbinical legend, much later than the New Testament writings. In *The Interpreter,* July 1908, p. 398, Cl. F. Rogers gives a complete list of all the explanations that have been advanced.

was of Hellenic origin.* For converts from Paganism, Jesus, Son of God, could have no father upon earth; consequently they came to look upon Him as conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost; this, we are told, is precisely what St. Luke himself means to say, when he places on the lips of the Angel Gabriel words like this: "*Therefore* the holy child that is to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." †

True, the text connects Jesus' supernatural conception with His divine Sonship; ‡ but it is just as true and evident that that relation is the reverse of the relation which the objection implies. According to St. Luke, Jesus is born of a virgin, not *because* He is the Son of God, but He shall be called the Son of God because He is born of a virgin. Besides, we must not understand the consequence marked by the particle διὸ καί, as though Christ's divine Sonship depended, for its existence itself, on the Virgin-Birth. He whom

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* HERZOG, *loc. cit.*, pp. 120-123.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 121, 127.

‡ However, BLASS, *Grammatik des neut. Griechisch*, n. 78, 5, observes that the subordination expressed by the particle διὸ καὶ is not always strict, and he refers the reader precisely to LUKE I [35]: Διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς Θεοῦ.

Mary is to conceive and bring forth is called "Son of God" even in verse 32, before any mention of supernatural conception has been made.

Some may say that verse 35 is an interpolation introduced into the primitive document of the Annunciation. We have already shown that this hypothesis cannot be held, even on merely textual considerations.* We might add that St. Matthew's text states expressly that Jesus was born of a Virgin, and makes not even the faintest allusion to His divine Sonship. Now, most critics rightly look upon the Gospel of the Infancy in St. Matthew as representing a primitive tradition, still earlier than that of St. Luke. We are told even that on that former tradition the third Evangelist depends, in what refers to the belief in the Virgin-Mother. Hence it may be inferred that that belief is independent of the connection made here by St. Luke.

The words of Gabriel have for their chief purpose to give an explanation to Mary who fears for her virginity: Let the Virgin not be disturbed, the Son of the Most High does not enter into this world like other men. Nay, that privilege, by which from His very birth He is set apart, shall serve, at the proper time, to declare the origin of Christ, Son of God.

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* Cf. above, pp. 86-89, 122-133.

When the Christian apologists of the 2d century insist on the similarities between Christian mysteries and the myths of Heathenism, it is evidently for them a mere argument *ad hominem:* Why should the Greeks ridicule and condemn those points of our doctrine, which they praise and approve in their own doctrine? In their attempt to account for those analogies, some have had recourse to the influence of Satan *the* inspirer of heathen poets, who did his utmost to ape the works of God, so as more effectively to deceive and lead men astray. This is but a particular application of the view then quite current in Jewish and Christian circles, *viz.:* that Greek wisdom was to be subservient to the Law and to the Prophets. Fortunately, the historical authority of our sacred Writings is not bound up with the failure of that very simple attempt to account for a feature often common to truth and falsehood:—plausibility. The Ancients readily looked upon myth and legend as a mere degradation of history; but this view is itself a proof of the distinction they made between the various manifestations of reality.*

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* The question of the so-called influence of heathen mythology on the Gospel of the Infancy has been studied, quite at length, by G. H. Box, *The Gospel Narratives of the Nativity and the alleged Influences of heathen Ideas,* in the *Zeitschrift für die neutestam. Wissenschaft,* 1905, pp. 80-101.

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Although the authority of St. Luke's witness extends to the contents of his Gospel, taken as a whole, yet all readers, even orthodox readers, are perfectly entitled to ask here for more particular justifications bearing precisely on the meaning and import the Evangelist meant to give to his text.

The first question refers to those Canticles found in St. Luke: the *Magnificat,* the *Benedictus,* the *Nunc dimittis,* with which the greeting addressed by Elizabeth to Mary may be joined.

The same spirit seems to breathe through these pieces; at all events, their literary make-up unquestionably implies some common origin. In their sentiments and in their language, they recall the Canticles of the Old Testament. Synoptical tables have been drawn up for the purpose of showing in a parallel way and verse by verse the Gospel text and its sources; the *Magnificat* especially has been compared to the Canticle of Anna, Samuel's mother.*

Should we infer that these Canticles are the exclusive work of the Evangelist or of an earlier writer whose compositions he used,—and that they have no greater historical value than the speeches ascribed by ancient historians to their heroes? Did we go even to that length and grant that St. Luke interpreted and expressed the sentiments of the persons he presents to his readers, we would not *"ipso facto"* deny any historical value to his narrative: Livy and Polybius still deserve to be reckoned among historians, even though they took that liberty. From the mere point of view of *possibility,* inspiration itself is not incompatible with that literary process, provided it is discovered by textual analysis. When relating a long and continued dialogue between Joshua and the whole people of Israel, the sacred writer construes the real sentiments of those who were there present, although he does not claim to attach a strict historical meaning to the words with which the discourse is actually introduced: *"Responditque populus et ait: . . ."* * However, we are not at all obliged to have recourse here to that extreme and radical explanation.

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* Cf. above, p. 19, note.

It may be held that the Canticles of the third Gospel were actually uttered, at least in their substance, by those to whom they are ascribed by the Evangelist. And why not? We must not be surprised at the stereotyped form which gives them a tone of artificial compositions. The Jews were then wont to borrow from Holy Writ the formula of their prayers, and of their constant fidelity to this tradition, even their modern euchologions contain many a proof. The practice was the easier that at an early age they used to become familiar with the Law and the Prophets, the Bible being their whole and only national literature. Nay, Jesus Himself followed in this regard the traditions of His country. Not only does He, in the wilderness, drive away Satan's suggestions by means of a Biblical quotation, and, on the Cross, borrow from the Psalmist His last words, but the *Our Father* itself, which was to remain *His Prayer,* is His own far more by the new spirit with which it is filled, than by the novelty of the words, taken in their material reality.

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* JOSUE, 24 ^{16}.

Again, it is a law of human psychology that, at the solemn moments of life, when great emotions have to be expressed, all men spontaneously recur to the most sacred formulas they may know. Classical antiquity always thought that the natural and fit language of prophetic utterances was poetry, and even versified poetry.*

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* This has been remarked by Father Didon: "Poetry is the language of strong impressions and lofty ideas; among

Does this mean that the strophic construction of the Canticles in St. Luke comes, in its present state, from those who uttered them? Not necessarily so. The author who wrote them down, whoever he was, may have given to those pieces their actual regular and rhythmic form, perhaps in order to make them hymns suited to the use of Christian liturgy. Some have inferred from that artificial construction that the Canticles in question are mere formulas of prayers, already current among the Jews, and used by St. Luke's personages as an expression of their own sentiments: just as we do, for instance, when we say the *Miserere* or the *Te Deum*. Considered in itself, this hypothesis is somewhat plausible; but two apparently unanswerable difficulties may be raised against it.

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the Jews, as among all Eastern nations, it was full of inspiration: every soul is poetic, and sings in joy or sorrow. If ever a full heart gave vent to an inspired hymn, it was the heart of the maiden elected by God to be the mother of the Messiah. She borrowed, from the histories in the Bible, of those women who before her had felt the awe of motherhood, as Leah and the mother of Samuel, expressions which she enlarged and transfigured. The national hymns which had celebrated the glory of her people, the mercy, power, wisdom and faithfulness of God, rose naturally to lips accustomed to song." (English translation), Vol. I, pp. 38-39.

The first difficulty is the perfect agreement of those Canticles with the circumstances of persons and times, which introduce them in the Gospel. A current formula always corresponds but vaguely to the soul-attitude and inner dispositions of him who makes use of it; here, on the contrary, the agreement is as perfect as can be imagined. This is evident as regards the greeting of Elizabeth: of the four distichs of which it is made up, there is not one that does not apply to the Mother of the Messias, and to her alone:

"Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
And whence is this to me,
That the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

On the other hand, of herself and of herself alone Elizabeth intends to speak, when she adds: "For lo, when the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."

What woman, besides Mary, could have thanked God for having favored her so much and so highly, that she sees already all nations proclaiming her blessed? Some one may say that, in the primitive text of the *Magnificat,* the hero was Israel. But then why do we read in St. Luke that God "looked upon the lowliness of

His handmaid"? It must be granted at least that this is an adaptation. To whom should we ascribe it? To the Evangelist, some answer. Why not to Mary herself? *

The stamp of concrete and particular circumstances is less distinct and visible in the *Benedictus:* but here again it must be confessed that several verses can be understood only of the son of Zachary: for instance: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." As to the *Nunc dimittis,* it is suited only to the lips of the venerable old man, who has just met the Messias, for whom he was longing. His song is the utterance of the last prophet: now that he has seen the dawn of the Messianic era, the last watchman in Israel wishes to be relieved from his duty.

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* This present question has nothing to do with the dispute that has been going on for more than ten years, about the attribution of the *Magnificat* to Elizabeth, in some MSS. Whether the canticle comes from Mary or from Elizabeth, is a point of textual criticism the solution of which leaves the subsequent question intact: does the *Magnificat* correspond to an historical reality or must it be looked upon as a composition of the Evangelist? Cf. above, p. 42.

Again, the hypothesis of the transformation of Jewish hymns into Christian songs is open to another difficulty, which is always most serious from an historical point of view: that hypothesis is merely gratuitous. In the whole Hebrew literature, whether canonical or not, there is nothing whatever like these Canticles. Really they are found in St. Luke alone.

Some critics suggest that the Evangelist borrowed those pieces from Christian liturgy. This view is just as gratuitous as the preceding, and besides far more improbable. We can hardly fancy an author openly claiming to relate the beginnings of Christianity more accurately than his predecessors, and then, from the very start, taking such liberties with history. We might just as well look upon as earnest and believe an historian of the French Revolution who would put the *Marseillaise* on the lips of J. J. Rousseau. The hypothesis in question becomes less improbable, if we suppose that, in the liturgy which was used as a source by the Evangelist these Canticles were said by the same persons as in the Gospel. But the question comes again: To whom should their composition be ascribed? *

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* About the essentially Hebrew and pre-Christian character of St. Luke's canticles, the reader may consult with

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For a long time past St. Luke has been accused of being mistaken, when he claims that Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem where Jesus was born, in order to comply with an edict of the Emperor Augustus, who had prescribed a universal census of the Roman world. The Evangelist adds that this census took place in Palestine, when Cyrinus was the governor of Syria.

This statement, we are told, is false for two reasons. First of all, there was no census in Palestine the year Jesus was born. Anyhow, Cyrinus was not at that time the legate of Syria. Then, even granting that there was a census in that year, Joseph was not obliged on that account to go to Bethlehem, the cradle of his family, since censuses were not taken by families.*

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profit RYLE and JAMES, *Psalms of Solomon,* especially pp. xci, xcii; about their connection with the eighteen prayers of the Synagogue: CHASE, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church,* in the collection *Texts and Studies,* i, 3, p. 147; concerning the *Benedictus:* W. SANDAY, *Critical Questions,* p. 131, and NEBE, *Die Kindheitsgeschichte unseres Herrn Jesu Christi,* p. 166.

* These objections are still urged, on the whole, by Pfleiderer and Schmiedel, and chiefly by E. SCHURER, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter J. C.,* i, pp. 501-543. (English translation of the previous edition, 1st

To that difficulty we might reply first that an actual mistake of that kind would not do away altogether with St. Luke's authority, nor especially with the historical character of his work. What historian could stand the test, if to be deemed trustworthy, his work must contain no error, not even in the details?

But here again there is no need to have recourse to such an extreme solution: St. Luke's accuracy can be upheld. Apologists have carefully studied and treated the question of Cyrinus. The reader will find in what follows not indeed all their explanations, but merely the certain or at least the most probable conclusions that now can be drawn from these explanations.*

(a) It is certain that the Emperor Augustus had contemplated taking up and actually did take up a whole system of censuses, the purpose of which was the drawing up of all the forces and resources of the Roman World.

(b) It seems equally certain that some periodical census by families took place in Egypt about

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division, Vol. II, pp. 108-143). St. Luke's accuracy is upheld by Ramsay, Zöckler, Chase, Knowling, Kenyon, etc.

* For the quotations of the texts and the reference to authorities, cf. especially W. Ramsay's excellent work: *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* 1898.

that time, in keeping with the imperial edict. From an inscription found at Lyons we learn that this was also the case in Gaul. But, then, why not in Palestine? There, as in all other tributary kingdoms, people paid to the Roman treasury a personal tax, which was really a poll-tax; * and it goes without saying that its perception required an assessment based on a census other than that according to which the land-tax was levied. The census by families is accounted for in Palestine the more easily that it was in keeping with Jewish customs. The census which took place in A. D. 6 gave rise to a popular revolt led by Judas of Gamala, precisely because on that occasion the officials of the census attempted to take it according to the Roman method, which consisted merely in recording on the spot the civil status of each individual. This is at least the view of scholars worthy of consideration.†

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* This tribute is referred to in MATT. 22^{17}.

† *Acts* 5^{37}, ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ἀπογραφῆς. This census took place the same year that the Ethnarch Herod Archelaus was deposed and that Judæa began to be ruled by a Roman procurator. St. Luke knows of that census, since he mentions it in the *Acts,* and he distinguishes it so clearly from that which, some ten years before, had brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, that he prevents any mistake by saying expressly in the Gospel that he speaks of the *first*

A measure resorted to by Tiberius in the subsequent census—A. D. 20— seems to have been taken as a consequence of the unfortunate results of that attempt at *romanization.* The Emperor commanded that the census should be taken in the Roman way, only in the provinces strictly so-called; whilst in the countries that were merely tributary, current customs should be followed. It may rightly be surmised that thirty years earlier, when the Roman power in Palestine was far less sure of itself, the imperial officials did not even think of another course of action. And then, must not the feelings of King Herod be spared?

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census, *ἡ ἀπογραφὴ πρωτη.* The census, understood and applied in the Jewish way, was not only by families, but even by tribes. We should not exaggerate the exacting character of the measure. The Jews, who had been commanded by the Mosaic law to go three times a year to Jerusalem, could not find it too hard to be called upon, from time to time, to appear in the birthplace of their forefathers. Besides, only they who were living in Palestine were obliged to leave their abode momentarily, and, as is well known, three or four days sufficed to take them from one end of the country to the other. From a statement of St. Luke, we gather that David's descendants had not been slow to comply with the imperial decree: the inns of Bethlehem were filled with people when Joseph and Mary got there. Probably they had made their journey coincide with the solemn feast of the Dedication, which always brought many visitors to *(c)* If the regular order of censuses was followed, the census which preceded that of the year 6 A. D., must have occurred fourteen years before,

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Jerusalem. In case some one would wonder that a poor mechanic like Joseph was able to justify his claims of Davidic descent, he may recall that, a century later, under Domitian (81-96), the two grandsons of St. Jude, who were introduced to the Emperor as descendants of David, were husbandmen (EUSEB., H. E., III, xx).—Again, Joseph may have had, besides his genealogy, a more urgent reason for being inscribed at Bethlehem, although residing at Nazareth. Since his recent marriage with Mary, he may have had his legal domicile at Bethlehem. Had this little town been for him only the cradle of his ancestors, we could hardly understand why his first thought was to go back there, when the Angel told him in Egypt that he could bring back to Palestine the Child and Its mother. Nothing less than the fear of Archelaus and a new warning from Heaven made Him give up his intention. Why did Mary accompany Joseph? Women paid the poll-tax, but it does not seem that they were obliged personally to be inscribed. In a census by families, the husband made a declaration of his wife and children. Hence it is unnecessary to have recourse to the explanation which has passed, in the shape of a gloss, into the text of the Syriac version, called Sinaitic: "Because both of them were of the house of David." The text of St. Luke, ἀνέβη δὲ καὶ Ἰωσὴφ . . . ἀπογράψασθαι σὺν Μαριάμ, strictly speaking, can be translated: "And Joseph also went up with Mary to be inscribed." The important fact here is Mary's journey to Bethlehem with Joseph; the census was mentioned in the narrative, merely because it was the occasion of that journey.

i. e., in the year 8 B. C.* This last date does not agree with St. Luke's statement, since the birth of Jesus cannot be placed earlier than 6 B. C. True, but are we forbidden to suppose that the operations of the census demanded at least two years? The census by families required necessarily a great deal of time, owing to the journeys it imposed. Besides, we know that at that time the relations between Augustus and Herod were rather strained. Moreover, the slow process of the census perhaps accounts for the mention of Cyrinus made by St. Luke.

In the year 6 B. C., the province of Syria was not governed by Cyrinus, but by Sentius Saturninus, or by Quinctilius Varus, who replaced him that same year. The latter held his office until the year 4 B. C., the latest date that can be ascribed to the birth of Jesus, since it took place before the death of Herod, which occurred toward the spring of the year 750 U. C. To help along the slothful Varus, especially in the taking of the census, the Emperor may have associated with him Cyrinus, of whom Tacitus writes he was "*impiger militiæ et acribus ministeriis.*" Had not

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* That there were periodical censuses, every fourteen years, rests on positive proof from documents, at least as regards Egypt.

Augustus done likewise when with the preceding legate, Saturninus, he had associated Volumnius? We may remark, too, that St. Luke calls Cyrinus neither a legate nor a proconsul; to designate his function the Evangelist uses a rather indefinite term of which he seems to be fond when speaking of the government of Palestine.*

This is no mere hypothesis. Most scholars grant that Cyrinus exercised twice a public function in Syria. Now, it is certain that in the year 6 A. D. Cyrinus was sent as legate to the imperial province of Syria. When was he sent for the first time? To this question the text of St. Luke gives a satisfactory reply, for it enables us to affirm that between the year 8 B. C. and the year 4 B. C. Cyrinus had a share in the government of Syria. Nay, it is most probable that in the year 3 B. C., perhaps even before the end of the year 4 B. C., he succeeded Varus, with the title of legate. Between Varus, who gave up his office shortly after Herod's death, and C. Cæsar, the grandson of Augustus, who obtained in the year 1 B. C. the legation of Syria and held it until the year 4 A. D., there is, in the series of legates, a period of three years, covered by the administration of an officer whose name has not reached us. Better than anybody else, Cyrinus seems to be the man fit to fill that gap. If this is the case, then we understand why the Evangelist says expressly that he intends to speak of the *first* census, whether the census which took place toward the end of Herod's reign was the first attempted by the Romans in Palestine, or rather the first taken by Cyrinus, who was also to preside over the census taken in the year 6 A. D.

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* Ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου, ii, 2; cf. iii, 1; xx, 20; xxi, 12. St. Justin says that Cyrinus was *epitropus* (procurator) at the time of the census (*I Apol.*, 34). Likewise JOSEPHUS (*Antiq.*, XVI, ix, 1) gives to Volumnius the title of Καίσαρος ἡγεμών, the official title of those who, like Pontius Pilate, for instance, governed Palestine by imperial delegation. The hypothesis according to which Cyrinus was associated with the legate of Syria in the government of that province accounts fully for a passage of Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, iv, 19, where he says that Jesus was born under the rule of *Sentius Saturninus*, although he knew the text of St. Luke and received its authority.

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The episode of Jesus in the Temple is a puzzle for those who as yet have failed to understand how a child twelve years old could have been conscious of His Messianic destiny. Is not their amazement due, after all, to naturalistic prejudices, or at least to a kind of spontaneous and instinctive mistrust they feel regarding any text that records supernatural manifestations?

Even though they profess that Jesus was not a man like other men, some Christian critics reluctantly admit that at times and in some places He did not act as other men. On the contrary, to the Evangelist who wrote it, also to all his readers,—who were exempt from that morbid fear of the supernatural to which hypercriticism gives rise,—both to him and to them the episode of that narrative seems a most normal occurrence. For is it not fitting that the Messias—especially if it is granted that He is the Son of God—should with full consciousness approach gradually the work He came to do in our midst? At all events, the tradition of the Child Jesus amongst the Doctors of the Law rests on solid historical testimony, and this is quite enough to hinder sound critics from consigning that tradition to the realm of legend.

The same should be said of the Angels' apparition to the shepherds of Bethlehem, on the night of the Nativity. Is it not natural that, when the Son of God entered into this world to save all men, the Heavens should have made His presence known to a few pure, simple souls? Mankind could have devised nothing better to welcome its Redeemer. In the eyes of some, that tradition is a mere equivalent of that other tradition, recorded in St. Matthew, according to which the Magi came from the East to adore the King of the Jews. This question we shall take up after proving the historical authority of St. Matthew's narrative. This particular case comes under the general problem of the differences found in our canonical texts as regards the Gospel of the Infancy.

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ST. MATTHEW, CHAPT. I AND 2.

That the contents of these two chapters are well connected, must be granted. St. Joseph's perplexity gives rise to the apparition of the Angel of the Lord, who manifests to him the mystery of the Virginal Conception (1 $^{18-25}$). As soon as Christ is born in Bethlehem of Juda, some Magi come from the East to adore Him, and this precisely awakens the jealousy of old Herod. To strike more surely the King of the Jews, he orders the massacre of all the children under two years of age, at Bethlehem and in the neighborhood. Acting on a command from Heaven, Joseph flees into Egypt and thus saves the Child and its Mother. After the death of Herod, under the reign of his son, Archelaus, he comes back and takes again his abode at Nazareth (2).

Whatever may be its origin, that narrative flows from one and only one source. We can take nothing away from it without disturbing deeply its harmonious limpidity. Even the genealogy (1 $^{1-17}$) is here in the right place; the point of view from which it was written is truly that of the first Gospel, since verse 20, in which the Angel greets Joseph as the *son of David,* supposes the first and the last verse of that genealogy. Some have said that, strictly speaking, the second chapter can be understood independently of the first, but this is a groundless statement, opposed by verse 13, which brings St. Joseph before us and does not introduce him to us, simply because this is already done in the first chapter.

What is the source used here by St. Matthew? There is neither in tradition nor in the text anything from which we may gather a positive answer to this question. All that can be affirmed is that that source differs from the source made use of by St. Luke. Even though Jesus and His Mother continue to be, in the main, the centre of the whole narrative, still its author manifestly intends to bring into prominence the part played by the just Joseph in the history of the Savior's

Nativity and early childhood, and this has led some critics to conclude that the tradition recorded by St. Matthew is of Galilean origin and that it probably originated in the circles where Joseph was well known.

That the source of these first two chapters is different from that of the rest of the Gospel, can be well supposed, but their historical value is neither destroyed nor even decreased by that hypothesis.* One thing which is certain, because we find its echo, as it were, in all the phrases of the text, is this: as they are read here, the narratives of the Infancy originated in Palestine and were transmitted to us by communities of Christians, who had come over from the Synagogue.

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* Wellhausen begins his commentary of St. Matthew (1904) with Chapter III, as if the first two chapters did not exist at all. To do this, one must be conscious of soaring far above the rank and file of men! The most recent commentator of St. Matthew, W. C. ALLEN, in the collection *The International Critical Commentary* (1907), is more conservative. For him the narratives of the Infancy belong integrally to the first Gospel, although St. Matthew holds them from a tradition which is peculiar to him. These narratives were most probably current in Palestinian communities as early as the middle of the first century. Cf. pp. xiii, lix-lxiii, 21.

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We find in the Gospel very few pages as replete with allusions to Holy Writ, to Jewish customs and preoccupations, as these pages actually are. The reader is supposed to know that, according to the wording of the Law,* betrothal is juridically equivalent to marriage itself (1 [18]). The author lays stress on the meaning of the name Jesus, which signifies in Hebrew, *God's Salvation* (1 [21]); he plays upon the word, Nazarene (2 [23]), and in such a way that, probably, he knows he can be understood only by those whose ears are able to catch the similarity of sounds which exists, in Hebrew, between Nazareth and Nazir. To what Christians could this comparison appeal but to those of Nazareth itself, and to those of Palestine, who were commonly called Nazaræans? † Of all the Biblical texts quoted here—and the Messianic import of which is taken for granted,—there is at least one that would have escaped the attention of an author writing far away from the scene of the events (2 [18]). At Bethlehem alone the tears of the Holy Innocents' mothers could recall the lamentations of Rachel, whose grave lay near the gates of the little town.* The parallel drawn between the national destinies of Israel and the personal destinies of Jesus (2^{15}) is based on an exegesis which is quite in the manner of St. Paul, and which he had learned at the feet of Gamaliel. The way in which the text of Michæas is quoted and used by the members of the Sanhedrim (2^{6}) recalls also the method then in vogue in Rabbinic Schools.† That solicitude for accuracy, shown in the expression "Bethlehem in Judæa" (2^{1}) betrays a Palestinian who knows that here a confusion can be made. The few touches that vividly describe Herod's suspicious, false and cruel character, would meet with Josephus' approval. The first Evangelist knows that Archelaus replaced his father, only over Judæa (2^{22}). This mere detail, thrown by the way, as it were, betokens a witness who speaks pertinently of the men and things of his country, for all know how easy it is to get confused regarding the history of the Herods and of the Roman procurators in Palestine.

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* *Deut.* 22 [23, 24].

† Cf. *Acts* 24 [5].

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* Nay, the Evangelist probably intended to state accurately the special Messianic meaning he ascribed to that text of Jeremias 31^{15}, by using here τότε instead of ἵνα.

† Cf. SCHECHTER, *Some Rabbinic Parallels to the N. T.*, in the *Jewish Quarterly Review,* Vol. XII, p. 418.

All through the narrative, we feel a certain anxiety to state and prove the Messianic claims of Jesus of Nazareth. He is Son of God, He was supernaturally conceived of Mary, He was born and spent His early years in the way the Prophets had announced of the Christ who was to come. Where and for whom could these words have ever been written? Until now, interpreters had unanimously granted that, judging merely from their contents, the narratives of the Infancy in St. Matthew betrayed their unquestionably Judæo-Christian origin. The critics of the Tübingen school, including Strauss, even maintained that the Jewish Messianic ideal alone accounted sufficiently for the Christian faith: in the long run the hope had created its object.* But now some critics are found who declare that view inadmissible, at least as regards the Virgin-Birth; they hold that this last belief could not have grown on Jewish soil; that it was transplanted thither from the soil of Hellenic thought.

How strange, groundless and improbable this opinion is, we have already seen; †—here, we shall merely draw the conclusion that naturally flows from the critical analysis of the first two chapters of St. Matthew. Those pages have so distinct a Palestinian coloring, and moreover they form so intimate a unit, that we can hardly think of bringing in from the outside what is their very soul: the Virgin-Birth of Christ. Our opponents agree that here we are on the ground where the question must receive a definitive answer, since they hold and fondly repeat that here St. Luke depends on St. Matthew: so that when we determine accurately the source of the first Evangelist, at the same time we find the gate, as it were, through which that belief made its way into the New Testament and into the Symbol of the Christian Faith.

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* Cf. above, pp. 76 and ff.

† Cf. pp. 91-97.

Does this mean that the idea of the Virgin-Mother was one of the Messianic doctrines, that were current in the century which immediately preceded the Christian era? The texts do not seem to justify a decidedly affirmative answer. The first words of Mary to Gabriel who in the name of God, proposes to her to become the Mother of the Messias, expressed the wish to know how that could be done. To the claims of the Christian apologists of the 2d century the Jews answer that the Prophets, including Isaias, never made such a prediction. Hence, in their

Greek translations of that time, they fondly render the Hebrew word *'alma* by νεᾶνις, *young maiden,* instead of παρθένος, virgin. In his debate with St. Justin, the Jew Trypho repeatedly and vehemently affirms that the Messias expected by his countrymen is to be a man, born like all other men.* This is also the view of most of those modern critics who have studied with special care the doctrines of the Synagogue of old.†

In spite of their conclusion, it still remains to explain why the LXX translated Isaias (7^{14}) by ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος. To say that in this case, as in others, they contented themselves with an approximately accurate translation, and that Christian Dogma has much benefited by their blunder,‡ is not to unravel the knot, but to cut it off heedlessly. The best-balanced critics will most probably still continue to believe that this translation may reëcho some ancient tradition about the meaning of the text of Isaias: a text the bearing of which may have been determined more accurately, when compared with the parallel text of Michæas.

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* *Dialogue,* 48.

† WEBER, *Jüdische Theologie,* 1897, pp. 354, 357; ORELLI, in HERZOG'S *P. R. E.,* 1903, Vol. XII, p. 736; Dalman, *The Words of Jesus,* p. 226. They purposely extenuate, it is true, the bearing of some texts which witness in behalf of the contrary view. The Book of Enoch calls twice the Messias the *Son of the Woman;* but this reading they look upon as inauthentic, even though, in chapter 62^{5}, it is upheld by all MSS., except G. Now, this last witness, preferred here to all others, is declared to be in the wrong at chapter 69^{29}, precisely because in this place, it favors the condemned reading. See R. H. CHARLES, *The Book of Enoch,* p. 164.

‡ This is the opinion of HERZOG, *loc. cit.,* p. 126.

The little esteem entertained by the Jews for the state of virginity may have been the motive why among them the public mind never took up resolutely the direction pointed out by the Prophets. But here again, we must avoid any exaggeration, lest we might run counter to other texts. It seems quite certain that, in the first century of our era, celibacy was deemed by many Jews a state more perfect and more favorable to the worship of God, since, according to Philo and Josephus, there were, during their lifetime, more than 4000 Essenes who made a public profession of continence.* The Jews dreaded barrenness in wedlock far more than celibacy, because the former was looked upon as the result of some divine chastisement.

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* PHILO, edit. Mangey, ii, 457; JOSEPHUS, *Ant. Jud.*, xviii, 1, 5.

Whatever may be the right view as to the Jewish state of mind regarding virginity, it is certain that the meaning of the prophecy of Isaias was not self-evident nor cogent from the mere text; * on the other hand, it was too faintly supported by tradition, to have exercised on the belief of Christians in the virginal conception of Jesus the decisive influence which Keim and Harnack, and before them Strauss ascribed to that text. That belief remains a distinctly Christian dogma, even though it originated in surroundings where a certain number of ideas of Jewish origin may have prepared the way for it.

From this instance, the reader may infer the bold and biased character of the affirmation of Baur and of his disciples, when they claimed that the picture of the Messias was to be found ready made in the Old Testament, and that what the Christians had to do, was merely to apply it to Jesus of Nazareth, through a kind of retrospective exegesis.

The Messianic prophecies, and still more the interpretation they received, had neither the simplicity nor the clearness which that theory supposes. Made of various details found here and

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* CORLUY, *Spicilegium,* Vol. I, p. 406.

there, they acquire some distinctness only when seen as a whole. Now the difficulty lies precisely in making the synthesis of elements the mutual relations of which are far from self-evident, and which seem even to exclude one another. Hence we find among the Jews contradictory views concerning the origin of Christ and the character of His work. Whilst the Scribes declare that the Messias shall spring from the family of David and be born at Bethlehem,* the people at large believe that He shall manifest Himself suddenly and that the place from which He is to come shall not be known.†

Some indeed there are who think they can solve that antinomy by saying that "during the century which preceded the Christian era, the Messianic idea assumed among the Jews two different shapes. The Messias of the prophetical school was to issue from the family of David, the Messias of the Apocalyptic school was to appear on the clouds of Heaven." ‡

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* MATT 2^{6}, 22^{42}.

† JOHN 7^{27}.

‡ HERZOG, *La Conception virgin. du Christ, loc. cit.*, p. 118.

It is indeed a simple and easy work to speak of a prophetical and of an apocalyptic school, of a Davidic and of a Heavenly Christ: these generalizations may seduce those who are not familiar with the texts; but others they cannot deceive. Bousset, whose competence on this subject is beyond question, warns us that here hasty classifications must be carefully avoided: "These new concepts (the apocalyptic concepts) are combined and welded with the old ones, under the shape of strange and contradictory images. In those compromises, the latter are often predominant, whilst at times the former impart their peculiar character to the (Messianic) hope taken as a whole, and then there remain but few vestiges of the national Hope of God. In fine, toward the close of the period of which we are speaking, the two cycles of Hopes proceed altogether confused." *

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* W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums in neutestam. Zeitalter* (2d edit.), p. 278. After quoting the passage given in the text, Father L. de Grandmaison adds these significant words: "As a matter of fact, among the documents of that time whether they come from Palestine or from the Dispersion; whether from the Hellenizing Jews or from the Jews who remained Jews only, all those which tell us of a personal Messias, have the apocalyptic features combined with the traditional features. Even in the 17th Psalm of Solomon, which expresses almost with-

Distinct as these two views may be, still they do not differ so much as to entitle us to say that the Christ of the Prophets belonged exclusively to a school, whilst the Christ of the Apocalypse was that of the people at large. In the same chapter of St. John, where some Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the feast profess to expect a Messias whose origin will not be known, others recall that, according to the words of Holy Writ, He is to be born at Bethlehem and to descend from David.*

This being the case, how could Christians have seriously thought of drawing up and composing, by means of the Scriptures alone and without any historical ground and support, a kind of *Life of the Messias,* which would just fit the character of Jesus of Nazareth? Besides, even supposing they had made the attempt, we may think that their text would be quite different from what it actually

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out alloy the national idea of the Messias, as a king and as a son of David, we find traces of ideal representation, pointed out most appositely by the authors to whom Herzog refers. In his final conclusion the latter passes by also the unequivocal restrictions made by H. HOLTZMANN (*Lehrbuch der N. T. Theologie,* I, 411) and W. BOUSSET, *loc. cit.,* p. 493, note." *Etudes,* May 20, 1907, p. 506.

* JOHN 7 27, 42.

is: for what purpose would they have given rise—deliberately, it would seem—to difficulties against their own thesis, by quoting texts of which it is no easy task to defend the Messianic character, whilst they do not mention other texts which apparently should have called their attention? *

It is chiefly in connection with St. Matthew that some critics have spoken of myth and legend in the narratives of the Savior's Infancy. The angel of God, who always appears in a dream, some Magi called and led by a star, the slaughter of all the children of Bethlehem, that were two years old and under that age, the flight into Egypt: all these events do not tally with the usual tone of the Gospel history and seem to have their parallel in the legends of heroes.

Some liberal Protestants, whose criticism, however, was not without conservative tendencies, were so much impressed with those considerations, that they came to discard here the historical character of the narrative, and to preserve only its religious value. This was the view taken, for instance, by E. Reuss.† Others do not go to that

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* For instance, why does St. Matthew 2 [18], quote Jerem. 31 [15], and omit *Numbers* 24 [17] and Isaias 60 [6]?

† *Hist. évangélique*, p. 157.

length. Still they think they can solve the difficulty, through the theory of the Hebrew *midrash:* we have, it seems, a history related with a great deal of freedom, for the purpose of edification, and chiefly for that of imparting to the Messianic faith, a concrete and popular expression.*

Even though we grant that some popular way of relating facts may have influenced here and there the form of the narrative, for instance in what refers to the star of the Magi, we maintain that the method of strictly historical criticism is not here so deficient as is claimed by some scholars. The Evangelist intends to *relate;* he distinguishes the meaning and bearing of his tradition from the didactic character of the parables which he records some pages after, in chapter xiii. From a mere reading of the text it is easy to gather that such is his state of mind in that regard; and, as a matter of fact, it has always been thus understood. In these circumstances, a believer will take unhesitatingly the narrative of the sacred writer in the sense the latter intended to assign to it, and look upon it as true history. When dealing with unbelievers, the apologist will show merely that the history of Jesus' infancy must have seemed plausible to the Evangelist, and that, through his text, it has come down to us, with all the necessary guarantees, so that no serious historian may, *a priori,* relegate it in the lump to the class of legends.

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* Cf. G. H. Box, *loc. cit.,* p. 80.

1. *The Dreams.*—Five times, in these two chapters, we find the Divine will manifested in dreams: four times to Joseph, and once to the Magi. All know that among the Ancients, dreams played a great part in divination. The Jews also must have looked upon sleep, as favorable to Yahweh's communications. Did they not read in Holy Writ that several of their ancestors had been blessed with Divine dreams? True, Jeremias raises at times his voice against the "prophets diviners,"* because self-illusion and deceit can more easily creep into night visions than into the waking state; but for that reason he does not mean to set aside altogether that mode of heavenly revelations. Had he done so, he would have gone against Jewish traditions and the text of the Law itself.†

Divine dreams occur more seldom in the New than in the Old Testament; but still even there they do occur. We find them not in the Gospel of the Infancy alone; the author of the *Acts* relates some that are closely connected with St. Paul's history:* St. Luke would not have received those night visions into his narrative, had he not deemed them sufficiently grounded. In his eyes, the thing itself was possible; and it was worthy of belief, because of the credit of those by whom it was related. Why would St. Joseph's dreams be more open to suspicion than those of St. Paul? As the Apostle, so the foster-father of Jesus was able to control and ascertain their divine origin by means of the events which followed and agreed with the prediction of which those events were the object. Taking the text as it is—and this we must do, since that text is the only ground of positive information—the reader does not feel the need even to guard against the suspicion of deceit, because of the manifest candor and sincerity of the witness: it is indeed from that page that the traditional portrait of the "just Joseph" has been drawn. Illusion? But here the so-called visionary is not one of those who are easily worked up: far from making use of the revelation he has just received regarding Jesus' unique destiny, to rely presumptuously on some miraculous help from Heaven, Joseph fulfills the orders given him, just as though the safety of the Child and of Its mother depended only on his exertions.

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* Jerem. 23^{25}, 27^{9}, 29^{8}.

† *Numbers* 12^{6}, *Deut.* $13^{1\text{-}5}$; cf. *I Kings* $28^{6, 15}$.

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* *Acts* 16^{9}, 18^{9}, 23^{11}, 27^{23}; cf. MATT. 27^{19}.

Why does the Angel of God appear, in St. Luke, during the day, whilst in St. Matthew, he appears in dreams? * The most plausible account will always be that the narratives differ, simply because as a matter of fact the events occurred differently. The first Evangelist is *a priori* neither ignorant of nor averse to heavenly manifestations that may occur during the state of wake; at least seven are mentioned in his Gospel; † therefore St. Joseph's dream does not depend at all on his special way of looking at the events and of relating them.

Only those critics who have made up their minds to ignore psychology, only *they* can claim that the revelation made to St. Joseph is a mere repetition of the revelation made to the Blessed Virgin, in St. Luke. Mary's testimony, in a matter which concerned her so closely, could not suffice her husband; and, on the other hand, it was not fitting that the Incarnation should take place without the knowledge and consent of the one, who was to be most intimately associated with that work of God.

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* However, taking only the letter of St. Luke's text, we cannot say with certainty whether the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in her waking time or not.

† Matt. 4^{11}, 17^{3}, 27^{53}, $28^{5, 9, 17}$.

A last remark may be made in behalf of the objective character of the narrative. Had they yielded to their respective natural tendency and genius, St. Matthew would have ascribed to the Heavenly Messenger the announcement of a King Messias, coming into this world to set up the *Kingdom of God,* whilst St. Luke would have ascribed to the same messenger the promise of a Messias, author of *Salvation* for all mankind. Now, we have just the contrary: in St. Matthew, the Angel speaks of *Salvation* (1^{21}), and in St. Luke, of a *Kingdom* ($1^{32, 33}$).

2. *The Magi.*—Kepler suggests that we identify the star of the Magi with a natural phenomenon, the conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars, which occurred probably in the year 747-748 U. C.* In spite of that attractive supposition,

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* TH. ZAHN, *Das Evang. des Matthäus,* 1905, pp. 98-102, upholds the hypothesis of a merely natural phenomenon, described by the Evangelist, not with scientific accuracy, but in a popular language and from the point of view of the astrology of the Magi.

interpreters hold generally that the sign given to the Magi took place outside the laws of nature, and that therefore it is beyond the field and reach of astronomy. Besides, the apologist has now to justify his claims no longer before the tribunal of science, but before that of history.

Some claimed to have found how the narrative of the adoration of the Magi originated. That narrative, we are told, was a mere adaptation of an event which made some sensation in the Roman Empire, toward the middle of the first century.* Some Magi came to Rome to adore Nero, under the leadership of the king of the Parthians, Tiridates. . . . But what about the star? It may have found its way into the narrative from two sides: Christians may have remembered the star of Jacob, foretold by Balaam, or still more readily, the profession of the Magi, who were Astrologers.—Even with a big grain of goodwill, one can hardly find a real analogy between the Gospel, and Pliny's narrative, except that both refer to some Magi; whilst a radical difference between them can be easily perceived. It is not of his own accord that Tiridates wends his way to Rome, he is not led by faith nor does he come prompted by love, to seek after a Savior: he comes to appease a tyrant. In vain some insist on these two features of the narrative, that the Parthian king knelt before Nero and went back to his country by a way different from that by which he had come. The former detail has nothing striking and extraordinary in that occasion; as to the latter, it lacks precisely the feature which is characteristic in St. Matthew, namely, the intention of the Magi to spoil the designs of Herod. What would be the results, if, in order to infer the literary dependence of two writings, we would apply to classical authors the proceedings which "hypercritics" take the liberty to use when dealing with the Gospel?

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* Dio Cassius, lxiii, 1-7; Pliny, *Hist. nat.*, xxx, 6; Suetonius, *Vita Neronis*, XIII. Our readers may find in Soltau, *Die Geburtgeschichte J. C.*, 1902, p. 37, the exposition of that bold hypothesis.—G. A. van den Burgh van Einsinga, *Jüdische Einflüsse auf evangel. Erzählungen*, 1904, insists especially on the story of the wise man Asita coming to do homage to the child Buddha.

That the prophecy of the star which was to come out of Jacob has always been understood allegorically, of the person itself of the Messias; and not of a star which was to manifest His birth, is witnessed by the *Targums* of the Jews of old. This was also the interpretation given to it by the Pseudo-Messias Barcokebas when he claimed to apply to himself Balaam's prediction. Again, had the text of *Numbers* played in the rise and growth of the so-called legend about the wise men's star, the part assigned to it, why is it that our Evangelist, who is so anxious to notice the fulfilment of the prophecies in Jesus of Nazareth, does not even allude to it? He seems to have no knowledge of it.

Rightly indeed does Christian Liturgy comment upon the adoration of the Magi by means of the passages in which Isaias extols the glory of Sion, on the day when the Gentiles shall come and pay her their homages, and the men from the East drive toward Jerusalem the long file of their dromedaries laden with gifts.* But, to draw from these poetical descriptions St. Matthew's narrative, with its concrete and special details, no exegesis, not even the most fanciful exegesis, can suffice: of that narrative at least some historical support and background must be sought in the real occurrence of the events. Here again, why does the canonical Gospel quote neither Isaias nor the Psalms, as was done by the Apocryphals?

A recently found document enables us—so we are told—to determine the epoch when the legend of the adoration of the Magi was arranged or at least found its way into the Gospel: is this true?

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* ISAIAS 60 and 61; cf. *Psalms* 72 10, 11, 15, 68 29.

A Syriac text (of which the author is unknown, although it has been ascribed to Eusebius), published in 1866 by W. Wright, tells us of Balaam foretelling the destruction of the Assyrians by the Greeks, and the rise of a star in Israel. The prophecy was communicated by Balaam to the Assyrian king then in power, and deposited in the royal archives. When the proper time came, under the rule of Pir Shabour, the star did actually appear, and some Magi were sent to the Jews' country. The text itself of that document was later on sought and found by men "well read in the Sacred Books," who had been struck by the agreement between the inspired text and the narrative of the wonderful events, related to them. From the inscription placed at the end of the MS., we may gather that this occurred in the year 430 (according to the era of the Seleucids), under the rule of Hadrian Cæsar, and the episcopate of Sixtus, Bishop of Rome, *i. e.,* in the year 118-119 A. D.*

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* The Syriac text was published in the *Journal of Sacred Literature,* New Series, Vols. IX and X, April and October, 1866. It was set forth as the source of MATT. 1 and 2, by CONYBEARE, in the *Guardian,* April 29, 1903, and by SCHMIEDEL, in *Encycl. Biblica,* Vol. II, pp. 1892-1893; and is discussed by NESTLE and HILGENFELD, in *Z. W. T.,* 1893, p. 435, and 1895, p. 447.

First of all, why would not the "Sacred Books" mentioned in that document, be the Christian writings of the New Testament? The researches made for the purpose to find the text of a letter which, according to the legend, had been written by Balak, may have been prompted by the desire to give a confirmation to St. Matthew's narrative, as is maintained by Th. Zahn and W. C. Allen.* That is a mere hypothesis, but what follows is certain: before the year 107, St. Ignatius looks upon the episode of the Magi as so well known, that he dwells with frequency and even with some exaggeration on the greatness and brilliancy of the sign given by Heaven, to reveal the birth of the Son of the Virgin.†

The adoration of the Magi has not the same purport as that of the shepherds. The revelation made to those men of the East, who were foreign to the Jewish religion, distinctly proclaims, at the start of the Gospel, the universal character of the salvation brought by Jesus. Now, since that universal character of Christianity is not particularly emphasized in what follows, it may be that in this circumstance we have another proof that St. Matthew drew from a special source the contents of these two chapters. In the person of the shepherds called to the crib of Jesus, the third Gospel intends to represent those privileged ones, who owe this favor to the simplicity of their social condition and to the uprightness of their hearts: "good-will" is found chiefly among them. Here again St. Luke remains the "Evangelist of the poor": between the two Epiphanies, his choice went to that of the lowly.

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* TH. ZAHN, *Introd. to the New Test.*, 1909, vol. II, p. 527; W. C. ALLEN, *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. 22.

† *Ad. Ephes.*, XIX.

3. *The Massacre of the Innocents.*—This is a rather strange event; had it occurred, it would have been mentioned by Flavius Josephus, who dwells at length on Herod's cruel deeds: that is the objection.

The so-called lack of plausibility rests chiefly on an overestimation of the number of the children that were killed at Herod's command. Judging from the population of the little town of Bethlehem, the children under two years of age must not have been more than twenty or thirty. Josephus may have known the fact, and yet not felt obliged to relate it: to give an idea of the savage deeds coolly perpetrated by the old tyrant, the historian had but the difficulty of choosing.

As it is, his arraignment is most severe, since he imputes to Herod the murder of his wife, Mariamne, of his mother-in-law Alexandra, of three of his sons: Aristobulus, Alexander and Antipater, of his brother-in-law Costobar and of his uncle Joseph, to say nothing of a hecatomb of Pharisees, and of the command he gave, when dying, to put to death many men of note, who were to be gathered in the hippodrome of Jericho.

In view of such deeds, the killing of some twenty little children, most of them born of obscure peasants, must not have appealed much to public attention; the more so that St. Matthew's text does not say that the execution took place everywhere on the same day, nor that only one mode of bloody death was resorted to: let us not be deceived by the representations of traditional iconography.

4. *The Flight into Egypt.*—Usener asks himself why Egypt is said to have been the place where the Holy Family retired for refuge.* In his answer he remarks first that at that time, when there were many and prosperous Jewish colonists at Alexandria and in the whole Delta of the Nile, it was natural for a mechanic driven from Judæa,

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* *Encyclop. Biblica,* Vol. III, p. 3351.

to take the road to Egypt: a remark which is most judicious. The same cannot be said at all of what follows in the article referred to: "Mythological ideas also, however, may have had their unconscious influence; it is to Egypt that, when attacked by the giant Tryphon, the Olympian gods take their flight": a statement like this is at least fifty years behind the age!

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5. *The Genealogies of Jesus* (MATT. 1 $^{1\text{-}17}$; LUKE 3 $^{23\text{-}38}$).—The fact that this has always been a bone of contention between interpreters, has not made the task of the apologist easy.* How explain that here Jesus is connected with David through two lines of ancestors, in which but three identical names are found? As was said already, whatever may be their import and bearing, these documents do not give the lie to Christ's Virgin-Birth; † in the following pages we intend to sum up, in a few strong statements, a fitting answer to the difficulty that arises from the divergence in the two genealogies.

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[*] Cf. ORIGEN, *Cont. Cels.*, ii, 32; MIGNE, *P. G.*, xi, 852.

[†] Cf. above, pp. 107-118; pp. 158-160.

(*a*) First, it may be granted that none of the proposed solutions is altogether satisfactory; however, it must be observed, too, that to uphold the value of those genealogical documents taken as a whole, we need not a perfectly satisfactory explanation.

(*b*) Of all the attempts of defence, known to us, the oldest is that of Julius Africanus, at the beginning of the 3d century. According to him, Jacob is the real father of St. Joseph (Matt. 1 ^{16}), whilst Heli is his legal father, according to the Jewish law called of the levirate (Luke 3 ^{23}). This exegetical view—Julius Africanus looks upon his sentiment as nothing more[*]—does not seem to have met first with great success, but in the course of time, perhaps owing to the authority of Eusebius, it became currently accepted and so it remained from the 5th to the 15th century.[†] Then it was that Annius of Viterbo (1490) thought he would do away with it in its foundation, by proposing to see in St. Matthew the genealogy of St. Joseph, and in St. Luke that of the Blessed Virgin; an hypothesis which was favorably received, during the 16th and 17th centuries, by many theologians, chiefly among Protestants, and is still taken up by Bacuez and Bishop Le Camus.* However, its weak point is manifest: the Jews were not wont to draw up a genealogy of their maternal ancestors; and then—this is the chief reason—no ancient writer, not even St. Irenæus,† ever doubted that both were St. Joseph's genealogies. The only advantageous feature of the modern view is its handiness: it does away with the trouble of reducing to unity the genealogies in question and thus suppresses the difficulty.

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[*] "Καὶ ἡμῖν αὕτη μελέτω, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐμμάρτυρος ἐστι, τῷ μὴ κρείττονα ἢ ἀληθεστέραν, ἔχειν εἰπεῖν. Τὸ μέντοι Εὐαγγέλιον πάντως ἀληθεύει," in Euseb., *H. E.*, i, 7; Migne, *P. G.*, xx, 97.

[†] Cf. Euseb., *loc. cit.*, col. 89.

(*c*) In our days, there is a noticeable tendency to preserve the starting point of the ancient system, that is, to see St. Joseph's genealogy both in St. Luke and in St. Matthew. However, instead of ancestors according to the flesh (Matthew) and ancestors according to the Law (Luke)—or

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* BACUEZ, *Manuel Biblique,* Vol. III, n. 116 (new edit., by BRASSAC, n. 184); LE CAMUS, *The Life of Christ* (English translation), Vol. I, p. 151; cf. also VOGT, *Der Stammbaum Christi bei den heil. Evangelisten Matthäus und Lukas,* in the *Biblische Studien,* 1907, Vol. XII, fasc. 3.

† III, xxi, 9.

vice versa, according to some modern authors*—the first Gospel would set forth the legitimate succession, according to which the *Davidic rights* came through St. Joseph down to Jesus, whilst the third Gospel would aim at giving the list of the real and legal *ancestors* who, through St. Joseph, connect Jesus with David. The former genealogy would show how Jesus is the *heir* of the promises made to David; hence it is framed from the juridical point of view. A successor is not necessarily a son: Joseph may be the heir of Solomon and of Jechonias, even whilst remaining, either by nature or by the law of the levirate, the real offspring of the other line which reaches David through Neri and Nathan.†

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* Cf. Vogt, *op. cit.*, p. x.

† The detailed exposition of this system hinges partly on the link between Zorobabel and Jechonias. According to Jeremias (22^{30}; cf. 36^{30}), Jechonias and his descendants are rejected by God, and no longer shall they have any authority over Juda: this, however, is not the same as saying that the cursed king was actually childless. As a matter of fact, the contrary seems to be implied by the text of Jeremias, and the author of Paralipomenon (*I Paral.*, 3^{17}), who knew the prophecy, mentions seven and perhaps even eight children of Jechonias. Hence it may be surmised that in St. Matthew (1^{12}), Ἰεχονίας ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλαθιήλ means *Jechonias was succeeded by Salathiel,* whose father is Neri, according to St. Luke (3^{27}). The son of

At the time our canonical Gospels were drawn up, there was a current dispute in the rabbinic schools whether the Messias was to come from David through Solomon or through Nathan.* Solomon had died in idolatry; Jechonias, the last of his descendants on the throne before the captivity, had been rejected in God's name by the Prophet Jeremias (22^{30}). The Gospel genealogies would thus satisfy both points of view, either of which, considered separately, contains a part of truth.

Grotius seems to have first proposed that theory which soon found acceptance on the part of many Catholics. It was developed by Father Poussines,

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Neri, descendant of David through Nathan, must have been *substituted,* by a disposition of God, for the descendants of David who belonged to Solomon's branch, and were rejected in the person of Jechonias. There still remains a difficulty. In *I Paral.,* 3^{19}, Zorobabel is the son of *Phadaia* and not of *Salathiel,* as in St. Matthew and St. Luke. Granting that the name Phadaia is authentic and designates a personage distinct from Neri—which is disputed—can we not suppose here a case of levirate? One of the two names, for instance, Phadaia, would be that of the legal father of Zorobabel, the other, Neri, that of his real father.

* Cf. in EUSEB., *Quæst. Evang. ad Stephanum,* iii, 2; MIGNE, *P. G.,* xxii, 896.

S.J.,* and a few years later adopted by the Bollandists in 1646 in their short biography of St. Joseph for March 19.†

(*d*) In this last hypothesis, which seems to be the most plausible, St. Matthew's genealogy has but a kind of conventional value, whilst St. Luke's genealogy is looked upon as more historical. Moreover, the artificial character of the genealogical document found in the first Gospel, betrays itself in many ways; and first in its ternary division into several series, each of two septenaries. After comparing the forty-two generations summed up in verse 17, with the parallel genealogies of the Old Testament, one gets convinced that in the Gospel, intermediary generations had been purposely omitted, so as to obtain a mnemo-technic, perhaps symbolical symmetry, which was intended and therefore artificial. ‡ On the other hand, and against the literary customs of the Jews, St. Matthew mentions four women, three of whom were sinners and one, a foreigner, to emphasize the fact that God's merciful designs, as regards the salvation of the world, did not always follow the way to which they would have been readily confined by the legalistic spirit of the Pharisees. The genealogy was evidently framed from a most definite doctrinal point of view: and this is a new proof that St. Matthew takes here the verb ἐγέννησεν in a rather broad sense.

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* *De Concordia Evangelist. in genealogia Christi,* Toulouse, 1646.

† This theory has been exposed with favor, quite recently, by P. Girodon, *Commentaire Critique et Moral sur l'Evangile selon S. Luc,* p. 182, and thoroughly defended by F. C. Burkitt, *Evangelion da Mepharrashe,* ii, pp. 258-266.

‡ According to Gfrörer, *Die heilige Sage,* ii, p. 9, note the arrangement of the genealogy in St. Matthew is based on a process of *gematria,* current among the Jews for the

The same preoccupations are not found in St. Luke: from his text we gather the impression that the Evangelist merely reproduced a document he had at his disposal.*

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drawing up of documents of that kind. The numeral value of David's name—in Hebrew DWD—is 14: hence, several series of 14 generations; and as the same name, David, counts three letters, the whole genealogy has been divided into three homogeneous series. Cf. Allen, *op. cit.,* p. 6.

* Even St. Luke is not altogether free from artificial arrangement. "It is not by chance that his genealogy contains 77 names, seven times eleven, and that the various sections are divided according to the same law." Girodon, *op. cit.,* p. 183. As to the various systems of redaction, in connection with the Old Testament genealogies, cf. F. Prat, in the *Etudes,* Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 488-494; Vol. XCIII, pp. 617-620.

(*e*) What is the source of these genealogies? Most certainly the Evangelists did not devise them. In St. Matthew, the names of the first series (1 $^{2-5}$) are taken from the first book of Paralipomenon (2 $^{1-15}$); those of the second series (1 $^{6-11}$) are from the same source (3 $^{1-16}$), but with some omissions. As to the names of the third series, only two, the names of Salathiel and Zorobabel, are found in the Old Testament. Although we cannot determine with certainty the source from which St. Luke drew the half of his genealogy, from St. Joseph to Nathan, the son of David, still we may suppose that, for want of official documents, the Evangelists probably had recourse to family records. Julius Africanus relates, indeed, that, prompted by jealousy, Herod had all these genealogies destroyed:* but this seems hardly probable, and besides, Josephus does not mention it at all. What Julius Africanus adds, deserves greater consideration: the relatives of the Lord, with whom he conversed, told him that they had reconstructed their genealogy as well as they could, with the help of tradition and of written documents.† This took place during the 3d century. We may reasonably suppose that one hundred and fifty years earlier, the Evangelists had at their disposal still better means of information.

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* Euseb., *H. E.*, i, 7; Migne, *P. G.*, xx, 96.

† *Ibid.*, col. 93 and 97, the *Desposyni* or relatives of the Lord came chiefly from two places: Nazareth and Cochaba.

(*f*) In the minds of the Evangelists, what was to be the bearing of those genealogies? Of course, the Christian belief in the Davidic descent of Jesus is not based on those documents: we find it just as emphatically taught by St. Mark and St. Paul, even though they appeal to no documentary proof. Considered in their contents, those lists of names have no special dogmatic importance, and were they not a part of an inspired text, their study would be a matter of mere curiosity. For the early Christians, Christ's human origin was an object of belief, even before historians had attempted to prove it. Jesus was the Messias and therefore the Son of David. Again, all knew that Jesus belonged to a family which had sprung from David, just as the same prerogative was acknowledged in those of His relatives who, on that very account, were brought before Domitian's tribunal.* As far as we can judge, that title was never denied to Jesus, during His lifetime, not even in ST. JOHN 7 [27, 41, 42].

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* EUSEB., *H. E.*, iii, 20.

But, a fact known to the public at large is one thing, and the value of a writen document that claims to prove that fact is another.

In the eyes of St. Matthew and St. Luke, the genealogies evidently could and did answer the purpose which these two Evangelists had respectively in their minds when recopying them. Does this mean that our Evangelists positively assure us that these genealogies express, even in the least details, the reality of things? Here we are confronted with the delicate question of implicit quotations incompletely endorsed by the sacred author. It is generally granted that, if that theory can be held in any case at all, it is in matter of genealogy.* Can we use it in this particular instance? Have we sufficient grounds to believe that St. Luke merely quoted his document?

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* "By the very fact that he gives us these documents in their special, hieratic, conventional form, and that he leaves them outside and, as it were, in the margin of his narratives—the sacred historian tells us quite plainly, it seems to me, that we may look upon them as documents he quotes, chiefly on account of their interest for Jewish readers, although he did not deem it necessary to ascertain their exact value, nor ascribe to them any authority but that of the tradition and of the public records from which they were taken." J. Brucker, S. J., in the *Etudes,* Jan. 20, 1903, p. 229; cf. Dec. 20, 1906, p. 801.

The question may be asked in connection with Rhesa at v. 27, and chiefly in connection with Cainan, at v. 36. Father Pesch, for instance, thinks that the difficulty can be settled, even though no recourse is made to an implicit quotation incompletely endorsed; but he adds immediately: "However, I do not blame the sentiment of those who believe that St. Luke merely records the genealogy which the Gentile Christians used to read in the LXX, without in any way detracting from or adding to the authority of the statements that are contained in it. Few indeed are those who, within the last centuries, have upheld that view, but still they are no mean interpreters and theologians. All however unanimously affirm that, when 'quoting' in that way, Luke did not fall into any formal error. Hence the upholders of implicit quotations may place themselves under the cover of those theologians and interpreters. Besides, there is in this particular case, some reason to admit a quotation of that kind." *

Eusebius goes much further. When mentioning the various ways of accounting for Christ's

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* Ch. Pesch, S. J., *De Inspiratione Sacræ Scripturæ,* 1906, p. 547.

genealogies in the Gospels, he proposes to extend to all the Lucan document the meaning of the short incidental phrase found at the beginning of the list, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, *as was supposed:* the Evangelist would have merely recorded the sentiment of the Jews, and left them the responsibility of their statements.* That opinion, which is based on a misconception, has never been favorably received: but it has at least the advantage to show that the theory of implicit quotation is no novelty in Catholic Exegesis.

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The Gospel of the Infancy differs, according as we read it in St. Matthew or in St. Luke. Does it follow that its historical value, as a whole, must remain doubtful for those critics who claim to follow a strictly accurate and scientific method?

Most certainly, the difference is real. And yet, we must ever remember that, as was observed already, the substance of the narrative is in both the same, especially as regards the Virgin-Birth. The actual condition of these first chapters prove once more that, in his narrative of the Infancy, Luke had access to a source different from the one used by Matthew,—both being distinct from the other sources used in the rest of the Gospel. It proves also that the traditions concerning the Savior's infancy grew and were transmitted independently. Besides, it is worthy of notice that in this case the differences arose by way of omission: one Evangelist relates that on which the other is silent. In these conditions, a difference is not a contradiction.

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* Migne, *P. G.*, xxii, 896.

The substantial agreement of several witnesses, in spite of the secondary divergences of their testimony, is a proof that they do not create the whole story out of their minds, nor misrepresent in the main the actual fact: only a previous objective reality can account for their agreement. This is a canon of historical criticism. The Evangelists then rest on a tradition about the human origin and childhood of Jesus.

That this remark, which had been made by the writers of old, is appropriate, is granted by some modern critics. "Granted our Gospels do not depend on one another, we are thereby justified in trusting their historical value. For in this case we have to deal with three independent forms of one and the same tradition, and even by the divergences which do not alter their fundamental unity and which betoken their mutual independence, they confirm one another." *

What is the value of that tradition? Is it myth, legend, or history? The differences found in the narratives by which it is transmitted, do not impair its historical character; from this point of view, they have either but little or even no import at all. Not infrequently does history pass to posterity, just as well as legend itself, in many and diverse narratives, all of which can really be reconciled with the truth of the fact. Even the best classical historians supply us with many unquestionable instances of the kind. On the other hand, legend assumes at times so characteristic a shape that it remains uniform and unchangeable. The perfect agreement of the Evangelists would not suffice, then, to prove the historical value of the Gospel of the Infancy; nor should their differences cause us to look upon that Gospel as a legend. It is by the means of critical study of the contents, by means of the history of the surroundings where our texts were composed, that the problem must be solved; and to its solution all the previous pages have been devoted.

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* H. Monnier, *La Mission historique de Jésus,* 1906, p. xiv.

However, a more direct answer is expected from us. Why did St. Luke say nothing of the adoration of the Magi, which would have been so appropriate in a Gospel, the aim of which is to manifest the Savior of the world? Shall we account for that omission, by ignorance or by wilful silence on the part of the Evangelist? Again, why does St. Matthew, who, in the course of his Gospel, expressly observes that Christ came to fulfil the Law, omit the performance of the Mosaic rites, at the circumcision of Jesus, and at His presentation and recovery in the Temple? These are the only omissions which really make a difficulty. The silence of the third Evangelist about the adoration of the Magi easily accounts for his not having mentioned the massacre of the Innocents and the flight into Egypt: these last two events can be understood only in connection with the first. Likewise we can readily understand why St. Matthew is silent regarding the Angel's apparition to Mary, and records only that granted to St. Joseph: as the first Evangelist looks at the Incarnation from the point of view of Jewish law, Joseph, Mary's husband, remains, in his eyes, the centre of the whole mystery.

Many attempts have been made to solve the problem of the harmony to be established here between the first and the third Gospel. The reader may find those combinations in the *Lives of Jesus* written by Catholics or by non-Catholics. They are no novelties, since, as early as the 2d century, Tatian and St. Irenæus made the attempt to complete one Evangelist by the other; most of these attempts are clever; some seem even to be most plausible: however, after all, they are mere hypotheses. It may be that the right solution has not yet been found.

When we attempt to state, not what an author knew, but what he did not know, why he put this here rather than there, and especially why he remained silent, when in all probability he might have spoken,—then indeed we need a great deal of discretion and reserve. Historians—the serious ones—those who have become familiar with the critical study of documents, know that in matters of that kind, one is often wiser in not knowing than in pretending a knowledge of questionable value. We are *a priori* unfavorably impressed by easy solutions and by a peremptory tone.

Besides the narrative of the Infancy, there are in the Gospels many other passages that call for moderation in our judgments. Let me refer only to the instance already pointed out by Rose. "According to all critics, St. Luke knew the journey of Jesus to Tyre and to Sidon, and yet he has not recorded that excursion which favored his thesis. We must then seek for another explanation of those omissions. Even though the author tells us that he writes "in order," we must not infer that he intends to recall all the events he knows. To my mind, the careful study of his method of narration throws more light on the divergences of his exposition." *

Had we two narratives agreeing point by point, some would not be slow to affirm that their testimony is after all but one, since they depend on each other, either because they quote each other, or because they use each other's materials. But they *do differ!* Does this give us the right immediately to denounce error, even before we study closely into the details?

There is noticeable in many critics, even among those who do not deny *a priori* the philosophical possibility of the supernatural, a decided tendency to take up the study of Biblical texts with a kind of distrust, and to be more exacting for them than for the texts of profane authors. If that wariness is only requiring proofs before acknowledging the existence of a miracle, it deserves to be praised on condition, however, that one does not require a process of arguing not adapted to the special nature of the subject, and that one bears in mind that, after all, Holy Writ will always remain a book of its own kind. Although subject to the rational laws of criticism, the close study of supernatural facts—a study which must come as a most important element in the solution of the religious problem—that study, I say, finds either opposition or help on the part of the observer's intimate dispositions—dispositions which do not belong exclusively to the realm of the historical method.

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* *Evangile selon Saint Luc,* p. 28.

Besides, the foregoing remark finds still more its application, when we have to appreciate the facts or to examine critically the document that relates them. After all, it is in the mysterious depths of the human soul that the conflict between dogma and history receives its solution.

In this connection, the following page of Father de Grandmaison seems most appropriate: "The dogma of the Virgin-Birth is a part of a doctrinal system which goes beyond it and thus sanctions it, and the acceptance of that system depends on the attitude one adopts regarding Jesus and

His Church. If the Savior's history, studied with all fair-mindedness, if the infinite fecundity of His work still living in the midst of men, leads us to look upon Him as the Messenger and the Son of God, if the authority of the Catholic Church alone is seen to be capable of interpreting the words of life and opening up the ways of salvation, then indeed we feel no need to discuss, with a captious subtlety, the various details, nor to restore, whilst groping about, as it were, a more or less coherent symbol; no longer is our faith at the mercy of researches that can be taken up only by a few select individuals.

Moreover, minute researches about the origin, preservation and historical bearing of the documents, will be most useful, provided they are carried on with fairness and method. It is unworthy of a genuine scholar to start those re-

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* *Etudes,* May 20, 1907, p. 526. According to St. Thomas, the miracle of the Virgin-Birth, far from being given us as a proof of the truth of Christianity, is rather a mysterious object of our faith: "Sciendum quod miraculorum Dei quædam sunt, de quibus est fides: sicut miraculum virginei partus et resurrectionis Domini, et etiam Sacramenti Altaris; et ideo Dominus voluit ista occultiora esse, ut fides eorum magis meritoria esset; quædam vero miracula sunt ad fidei comprobationem: et ista debent esse manifesta." *Summa Theol.,* iii *pars,* q. 29, a. 1, ad 2.

searches with the set purpose to turn against the historical value of the Gospel any circumstances at all, even the most insignificant. This is not a suggestion dictated merely by our Christian convictions: some critics, who are far from overscrupulous in maintaining the inerrancy of Holy Writ, loudly and emphatically protest against the exceptional way with which the sacred historians have been treated. In the book of Acts (5^{36}) there is found a statement that seems incompatible with the narrative made by Josephus. At once, St. Luke is declared to be in the wrong. But why not Flavius Josephus? . . . asks Harnack.* The same remark might be applied to many other cases.

In Biblical criticism, even more so than in other departments of knowledge, any explanation that does not rest on an accurate and impartial analysis of the texts raises many more difficulties than it answers; it is doomed sooner or later to disappear.

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* *Luke the Physician* (English transl.) p. 123, note 1.

THE LORD'S BRETHREN.*

THE question of the "Lord's Brethren" is susceptible of no new solution, and all that could have been written on the subject has been actually written. It remains for scholars only to state with accuracy in what measure these explanations square with the texts. Now, this is far from being an easy task: both from the number and from the character of its data, the problem is one of the most complex of the New Testament, and owing to that complexity itself, any one who gives his preference to this or that solution may easily allow himself either to be deceived or to deceive. If we take into account only one part of the elements of the dispute, and lose sight of the language of our Gospels, and of the customs and belief of the circles where they were written, we may easily do away with the difficulty arising from the expression, "the Brethren of the Lord"; it suffices to say that Jesus was not the only son of His mother; but that brief solution which recommends itself by its simplicity is merely a deception, nay a snare; for we may come soon to realize that instead of one real, though not unsurmountable difficulty, several other difficulties have been raised which, taken all together, make on the mind a far more decisive impression.

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* This essay was first published in the *Revue Biblique,* January, 1908.

In order to treat this question with some order, we divide it into three parts: Firstly, the facts; secondly, the explanations given of those facts; thirdly, criticism and conclusion.

CHAPTER I.

THE FACTS.

The four Evangelists, the author of the *Acts* and St. Paul speak of the "Brethren of the Lord." * According to St. Matthew and St. Mark, they are named James, Joseph, Simeon and Jude. In the same passage mention is made of the sisters of Jesus, who dwelt in Nazareth.† The first three

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* Matthew 12^{46}, 13^{55}; Mark 3^{31}, 6^{3}; Luke 8^{20}; John 2^{12}, 7^{5}; *Acts* 1^{14}; *II Cor.* 9^{5}.

† Matthew 13^{55}; Mark 6^{3}, whose testimony regarding James is confirmed by that of St. Paul, *Galat.*, 1^{19}. The Greeks at times translated the Hebrew form of the name Joseph into the softer form Ἰωσῆς, Ἰωσῆτὸς (Mark 6^{3}, $15^{40, 47}$), as may be seen by comparing, in a critical edition, Matthew 13^{55} with 27^{56}. Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Gal. (Dissert. II, The Brethren of the Lord)* p. 268, calls in question—wrongly, I think—the identity of the two names (Ἰωσήφ and Ἰωσῆς). Cf. Dalman, *Grammat. aram.*, p. 175; Allen, *Comment. on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, pp. 156, 299.

Evangelists reckon among the pious women who followed Jesus and stood at the foot of the Cross, Mary the mother of James, who, according to the still more explicit statement of St. Matthew and St. Luke, was the mother of James the Less and of Joseph.* On the other hand, St. John writes of that same Mary, that she was the sister of the mother of Jesus; then, in order to designate her with still more precision, he adds *ἡ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ*, "that of Clopas." †

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* MATTHEW 27^{56}; MARK 15^{40}; LUKE 24^{10}. We reserve here the adjective, *Less,* without pretending to define its import; the text of St. Mark reads **τοῦ 'Ιακώβοῦ του μικροῦ**, which does not necessarily imply a comparison with another James. That James may have been called *the Short,* on account of his small height.

† JOHN 19^{25}. The identity of Mary of Clopas with the woman the Evangelist calls the sister of Jesus' mother—whatever may be the true import of the word **ἀδελφή**—seems to be beyond reasonable doubt. In fact, this is the view most generally held. Cf. TH. CALMES, *L'Evangile selon S. Jean,* 1904, p. 440; LOISY, *Le Quatrième Evangile,* 1903, p. 877; C. HARRIS, in the *Diction. of Christ and the Gospels,* Vol. I, 1906, p. 234. In order to exclude the hypothesis of a strictly so-called *sister* of the Blessed Virgin (a hypothesis which is not necessary) it has been suggested that two sisters could not have had the same name. Cf. LIGHTFOOT, *op. cit.,* p. 264. That is no conclusive reason: among the children of Herod the Great, two bear the name of Philip. At Rome, Octavia, the sister of the Emperor Augustus, had four daughters, two of whom were named Marcella and two, Antonia.

The brethren of the Lord did not believe in Him during His public life;* however, after the Resurrection they are reckoned among His disciples.† Nevertheless, when the Evangelists give a list of the Apostles, they always place together those names which rightly or wrongly have seemed to be those of the Lord's brethren: James of Alpheus, Jude of James and Simeon the Cananæan or Zelotes. In St. Matthew and St. Mark, instead of Jude, we find Lebbæus or Thaddæus.‡ In fine, we must bear in mind that one of the Catholic Epistles claims to be the work of Jude, the brother of James.§

To those data of the canonical writings, we must add what is said by Josephus and by Hegesippus.

Josephus relates that, toward the year 62, there was put to death "James, the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ." || Eusebius, who was

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* JOHN 7 ^{5}; MARK 3 ^{21}; cf. 6 ^{4}.

† *Acts* 1 ^{14}; *I Cor.* 9 ^{5}.

‡ MATTHEW 10 ^{3,4}; MARK 3 ^{18}; LUKE 6 ^{15,16}; *Acts* 1 ^{13}.

§ *Jude* 1 ^{1}.

|| *Ant. Jud.*, XX, ix, 1. It goes without saying that the authenticity and integrity of this passage, as well as of two other passages of the same author bearing on Christ and on the beginnings of Christianity, have been disputed.

acquainted with the passage of Josephus, appeals for a confirmation of the same fact to two other documents: the *Recognitiones Clementinæ* and the history of Hegesippus. From the details of their narration, one sees that these last two witnesses do not exclusively depend on the testimony of the Jewish historian.*

Toward the year 160, Hegesippus gathered on the spot the Palestinian traditions regarding the Lord's brethren: he probably conversed with their descendants. Julius Africanus affirms he met some of them fifty years later.† Now, we may sum up as follows the details given by Hegesippus, as preserved by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History.*

James, the brother of the Lord, named the Just, took up, with the Apostles, the government of the Church of Jerusalem (ii, 23). "After James the Just had suffered martyrdom, as the Lord had also on the same account, the son of His paternal uncle, Simeon, the son of Clopas, was appointed bishop (of Jerusalem); all preferred him as next bishop, because he was another cousin of the

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* Euseb., *H. E.,* ii, 23.

† Euseb., *H. E.,* i, 7.

Lord" * (iv, 22). That same Simeon was cruci-

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* Μετὰ τὸ μαρτυρῆσαι Ἰάκωβον τὸν δίκαιον ὡς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῳ λογῷ, πάλιν ὁ ἐκ τοῦ θείου αὐτοῦ Συμεῶν ὁ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ καθισταται ἐπίσκοπος, ὃν προέθεντο πάντες ὄντα ἀνεψιὸν τοῦ κυρίου δεύτερον. Another translation has been suggested. LIGHTFOOT, *op. cit.*, p. 276, translates as follows: "After the martyrdom of James the Just on the same charge as the Lord, his paternal uncle's child Symeon, the son of Clopas, is next made bishop (of Jerusalem), who was put forward by all as the second (bishop) in succession, being cousin of the Lord." That text is so important that we feel the need to justify the wording of our translation. (a) The adverb πάλιν which is here put into prominence, cannot emphasize the insignificant fact that James was given a successor, whilst it brings out appropriately this remarkable circumstance, that the second bishop of Jerusalem was, like the first, a cousin of the Lord. (b) In the construction ὃν προέθεντο πάντες ὄντα ἀνεψιὸν τοῦ κυρίου δεύτερον the word δεύτερον refers to ἀνεψιὸν rather than to ἐπίσκοπος: an interpretation which seems necessary when one bears in mind that the verb προτίθημι is not synonymous with προΐστημι, καθίστημι, εκλέγω or χειροτονέω (*to establish, to constitute, to set, to command*), but signifies *to prefer*. Now the reason why Simeon was *preferred* to any one else, was that another cousin of the Lord might thus occupy the see of Jerusalem. (c) When connecting αὐτοῦ with κυρίου, not to Ἰακώβου, we merely follow the general cadence of the phrase; yet, strictly speaking, Simeon might be the son of *James'* paternal uncle, and still remain the cousin of the Lord. Later on we shall speak of the sentiment of those who look upon Mary, the mother of James, as sister both of *Clopas,* the father of Simeon, and of *Joseph,* the foster-father of Jesus. That Clopas was the brother of

fied under Trajan (98-117), at the age of one hundred and fourteen. From his advanced age, Eusebius infers that he may have seen and heard the Lord; the more so, he adds, that the Gospel mentions a certain Mary, (wife) of Cleophas (= Clopas), of whom Simeon was born. There were still living at the same epoch, other relatives of the Lord, for instance, the grandsons of Jude, "who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh" (iii, 32; cf. 11, 20). Once already under the rule of Domitian (81-96), they had been taken before the imperial tribunal, as descendants of David and relatives of Christ; but the Emperor had bidden they should be released, for he thought that those peasants could in no way endanger his authority in Judæa (iii, 20).*

To the texts of Josephus and Hegesippus, some authors added unhesitatingly a fragment ascribed

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Joseph, is affirmed by Eusebius, on the testimony of Hegesippus. (III, 11; cf. 32.)

It follows that, for Hegesippus and consequently for Eusebius, the term ἀδελφός is here equivalent to ἀνεψιός, and that the relationship of James to the Lord does not essentially differ from that of Simeon.

[*] Of the four personages called in the New Testament "Brethren of the Lord," Joseph is the only one not referred to in the tradition of the 2d century, perhaps because he died at an early age.

to Papias of Hierapolis; * but now that document is generally declared inauthentic.*

CHAPTER II.

THE EXPLANATIONS.

1. At the beginning, the appellation "Brethren of the Lord" must have been understood by all. Until about the end of the 2d century, there is no trace of any divergence, still less of any discussion on this topic.

The earliest explanation of the term is found in Hegesippus, who, besides, does not pretend to solve a difficulty, but merely to state what all knew. Simeon was chosen to succeed James in the see of Jerusalem because he had the privilege of being *another cousin* of the Lord; now James is commonly called by Hegesippus *the brother* of the Lord: which shows that under his pen, the two expressions are equivalent.* Besides, he tells us that Simeon was the cousin of Jesus through his father, Clopas.

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* Cf. No. 2397 of the MSS. of the Bodleian Library at Oxford; given in Migne, *P. G.*, v, 1261-1262.

* Its authenticity, accepted by Mill, *The Accounts of O. Lord's Brethren in the N. T.*, p. 238, is deemed very doubtful by Corluy, *Les Frères du Seigneur*, in the *Etudes*, 1878, Vol. I, p. 15. After Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 273, Vigouroux, *Les Livres saints et la Critique rationaliste*, Vol. IV (1891), p. 497, sees in it the work of a grammarian, named Papias, who lived in the 11th century.

From the tenor of the texts, as well as from the way in which they are made use of by Eusebius, it is evident that, for the Palestinian chronicler, James and Simeon are identical with the personages of the same name, reckoned in the Gospel among the brethren of the Lord. Were they, in his mind, two brothers instead of cousins? The few and scanty fragments of Hegesippus that have come down to us, do not enable us to give to this question a positive answer. Certain it is, though, that he never calls Simeon "brother of James."

The same writer says also of Jude: "He who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh." † Had Jude been the brother of

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* This conclusion is important. Hence attempts have been made to explain in various ways the testimony of Hegesippus, as may be seen from LIGHTFOOT, *op. cit.*, p. 278; C. HARRIS, in *Diction. of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. I, p. 234; J. B. MAYOR, in *Diction. of the Bible* (Hastings), Vol. I, p. 320; RENAN, *The Gospels*, pp. 27, 28, 277, ff.; CORLUY, in *Etudes Religieuses*, 1878, Vol. I, p. 22.

† Τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα λεγομένου αὐτοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, *H. E.*, III, 20. Likewise we read in the *Clementine Homilies*, xi, 35, in connection with James: ὁ λεχθεὶς ἀδελφὸς τοῦ κυρίου. Jesus has a father, He has "brothers," but in a very special sense: this is why the current appellation needs explanation.

Jesus in the strict sense of the word, why remark that *he was called His brother?* That was self-evident. Perhaps some one may say that of all the "brothers" of the Lord, Jude was the most prominent, and that, on this account, he was called antonomastically ἀδελφὸς τοῦ κυρίου? That hypothesis cannot be held for the following reason: All know that the "*brother* of the Lord" by way of eminence, was James, the first bishop of Jerusalem; so much so that at the beginning of his letter Jude himself assumes merely the title of "brother of James." As to the qualifying words κατὰ σάρκα, *according to the flesh,* they mean quite enough, even if their only purpose is to emphasize the fact that, unlike the Apostles and Disciples, Jude was not the brother of Jesus *according to the spirit* only.

In those primitive ages, the appellation "brethren of the Lord" may not have been so much a title of honor as an easy means to distinguish from one another the many important personages of the Church of Jerusalem, who bore the same name: according to some authors, there were four, perhaps five, Jameses.

The *Gospel of James* and the *Gospel of Peter,* which are apocryphal works of the end of the 2d century, look upon the brethren of the Lord as children born to St. Joseph of a first marriage, before he became the husband of Mary.* Whilst according to Hegesippus they were the paternal cousins of Jesus, according to these documents they were His half-brothers.†

2. At the threshold of the 3d century, we find Tertullian. Did he hold that the brethren of the Lord were born of Mary, mother of Jesus? Helvidius and St. Jerome believed he did,‡ whilst this is questioned by some modern scholars, such as J. B. Lightfoot, for instance.§

In the passages where the great polemic takes up the subject incidentally, he is arguing against the doctrines of the Marcionists, who misused the words of Christ recorded in the Gospels: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" || In

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* *Evang. Jacobi,* ix, xvii, xv; cf. *Pseudo-Matt.,* xxxii; *Evangel. Nativ. Mariæ,* viii; *Historia Josephi,* xxxv. As to the *Gospel of Peter,* cf. ORIGEN, *In Matt.,* xiii, 55.

† According to ST. JEROME, *Comment. in Matt., xii,* 49-50, the Apocryphals gave to Joseph's first wife the name of Melcha or Escha: she was—so they say—the daughter of Ancheus, brother of Zachary, John the Baptist's father.

‡ *Contra Helvid.,* 17.—Father d'Alès, *La Thélogie de Tertullien,* 1905, pp. 196-197, seems to adopt St. Jerome's view.

§ *Op. cit.,* p. 278.

|| *De Virginibus velandis,* vi; *Adv. Marc.,* iv, 19; *De Carne Christi,* vii, xxiii; *De Monogamia,* viii.

order to prove the reality of the human nature in Jesus, Tertullian insists on Mary's maternity. Jesus is a man just as really as we are: He has a *mother,* who gave Him her own flesh, the Law gives Him a *father* in the person of St. Joseph,* the Gospel speaks of His "fratres." The Virgin conceived Jesus, it is true, when she was only "betrothed"—this is Tertullian's view—; but the Law puts on the same level the betrothed maiden and the wife. And thus, after bringing forth the *Word* of God, Mary was to become really the "wife" of Joseph, *semel nuptura post partum.* Why should we not take in the same sense this expression, the strongest Tertullian ever used as regards Mary: *virum passam?* The Virgin bore the yoke of man, since by the law of marriage she was subject to Joseph. We must bear in mind that we have to deal with a lawyer, for whom legal realities carry a great deal of weight.

These considerations are not to be overlooked; however, they can hardly stand before the fact, that, toward the middle of the 3d century, Origen, in a passage soon to be quoted, apparently ranged Tertullian among the opponents of Mary's perpetual virginity.

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* Tertullian holds the virginal conception of Jesus.

It seems as though Clement of Alexandria (+ 215) wished to combine the view of Helvidius with that of the apocryphal Gospels. In a passage of the Hypotyposes, quoted by Eusebius (*H. E.*, ii, 1), he apparently identifies James, the brother of the Lord, with the Apostle of the same name, James, son of Alpheus. On the other hand, in a fragment which originally belonged probably to the Latin translation made at the suggestion of Cassiodorus, he looks upon Jude, the author of the Catholic Epistle, both as the brother of James and as one of the sons of Joseph.* The contradiction may be here only on the surface. The brethren of Jesus are called the sons of Joseph. On what ground? It is neither impossible nor improbable that, in the eyes of Clement of Alexandria, they were only his nephews, entrusted to his care by their dying father—either Clopas, his brother, or Alpheus, his brother-in-law. This is a mere supposition; but it may be we must have recourse to it, instead of charging with inconsistency one who could so easily have all the possible information about the historical tradition of the 2d century, concerning the brethren of the Lord.

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* The fragment is given in MIGNE, *P. G.*, ix, 731-734. "Jude, who wrote the Catholic Epistle, was one of Joseph's sons and the Lord's brother, a man of deep piety; although conscious of his relationship with the Savior, he does not say that he was His brother; but what does he say? *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ,* because He was his Lord, and *brother of James.* This also is true, he was James' brother, since he was the (son) of Joseph." Cf. CASSIODORUS, *De Instit. Div. Lit.*, 8.

Origen (+ 254) is conversant with the fact that some one whose name he does not know, or prefers not to mention, has been so foolish as to say that, after the birth of Jesus, Mary had from Joseph other children: and that on this account, Jesus publicly disowned her as His mother (MARK 3^{33-34}). That is a heresy, he adds, which is most plainly refuted by the text of Holy Writ.* Who is the personage thus aimed at by the great Alexandrian interpreter? Naturally we think of Tertullian. Of all those predecessors of Origen, whose works have come down to us, he alone is open to suspicion on that point. Moreover, it is to be observed that Helvidius and St. Jerome knew, for the same period, of no other opponent of Mary's perpetual virginity. To this one fact must be added that twice Tertullian writes that Jesus publicly disowned His mother and His *fratres* owing to their unbelieving spirit.*

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* The passage is known to us only through St. Jerome's translation: "Debemus in hoc loco, ne simplices quique decipiantur, ea quæ solent opponere hæretici, confutare. In tantam quippe nescio quis prorupit insaniam, ut assereret negatam fuisse Mariam a Salvatore, eo quod post nativitatem illius juncta fuerit Joseph; et locutus est, quæ quali mente dixerit, ipse noverit qui locutus est. Si quando igitur hæretici vobis tale quid objecerint, respondete eis et dicite: Certe Spiritu Sancto plena Elisabeth ait: *Benedicta tu inter mulieres.* Si Sancto Spiritu benedicta canitur Maria, quomodo eam Salvator negavit? Porro quod asserunt eam nupsisse post partum, unde approbent non habent. Hi enim filii qui Joseph dicebantur, non erant orti de Maria, neque est ulla Scriptura quæ ista com-

Besides, Origen unmistakably favors the explanation we read in the Apocryphals of James and of Peter:—the brethren of the Lord are the children of St. Joseph.†

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memorat." *Homil. vii in Lucam,* in medio. MIGNE, *P. G.,* xiii, 1818; cf. *Contra Celsum,* i, 47. One phrase of Abbé LESÊTRE, in the *Revue du Clergé français,* July 15, 1907, p. 117, might suggest that Origen must be reckoned among the opponents of Mary's virginity *post partum.* But the same author tells us, a few pages after, p. 129, that Origen must be looked upon as one of those "who held most strongly the doctrine of Mary's virginity." As a matter of fact, the text which first was alluded to, concerns the virginity *in partu.* Cf. *Hom. xiv in Lucam;* MIGNE, *P. G.,* xiii, 1834. Understood from a merely juridical point of view, Origen's statement seems to be, in this place, susceptible of orthodox meaning.

* *De Carne Christi,* vii; *Contra Marc.,* iv, 19.

† *In Matt.,* xiii, 55; *In Luc.,* Hom. vii, in med.; *In Joan.,* Vol. I, 6; II, 12, in the *Catena* Corderii.

Likewise St. Hilary (about 355) knows of irreligious and presumptuous men, out of all sympathy with the spiritual view, who think and speak of Mary in a wrong and unbecoming manner, and assume that they are justified by what is written regarding the *fratres* of the Lord. The personages in question were not born of Mary, rather they are children Joseph had from a previous marriage." *

3. It was toward the end of the 4th century that started the first controversy regarding Mary's perpetual virginity: that controversy was connected with a very widespread movement which then carried Christendom toward monachism. Virginity was extolled, of course, above the state of matrimony. Many fondly recalled that Jesus and Mary had been the first to raise in the world the standard of Virgins.† That in this chorus of praises there was some exaggeration is quite probable. At times St. Jerome himself did not keep within proper bounds: for this his opponents

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* *Comment. in Matth.*, i, 3-4.

† "I think it in harmony with reason that Jesus was the premices among men of the purity which consists in chastity, and Mary among women; for it were not pious to ascribe to any other than to them (or: to her) the premices of virginity." ORIGEN, *In Matth.;* MIGNE, *P. G.*, Vol. X, 17.

reproached him, and his friends had to admit that, in his defence of virginity against Jovinian, there were erroneous and misleading expressions: in their eyes he lowered marriage altogether too much.*

At all events, a reaction soon set in. It was by appealing to Holy Writ that the opponents of monachism strove, this time, to extol marriage. Is not Mary described in it as the honest mother of a family? After the Virgin-Birth of her First-born she had from Joseph other children, those called in the Gospel, the "fratres" of the Lord.

The cradle of that doctrinal campaign seems to have been Laodicæa in Syria: St. Epiphanius tells us that, in his time, that view was ascribed to Apollinaris (+ 390); at least it was put forth by some of his disciples.† Thence it passed probably to Arabia and spread among the Antidicomarianites, who not only opposed the excessive view of the Collyridians, but fell into an opposite error.‡ Whilst Epiphanius was engaged in refuting them, their ideas were making their appearance in Rome. In 380, an obscure and untalented man, Helvidius, published there a pamphlet, in which he plainly denied Mary's perpetual virginity. The book caused scandal, and St. Jerome, then in Rome, was asked to refute it. This task he took up, about the year 383, in his treatise *De perpetua Virginitate Mariæ, adversus Helvidium.**

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* Cf. *Epist. Hieron. ad Pammachium,* xlviii, xlix; *ad Domnionem,* l.

† *Adv. Hæręs.,* lxxviii, I.

‡ In the treatise of St. Epiphanius, *Adv. Hæres.,* the 78th heresy is that of the Antidicomarianites; the following chapter (79) refers to the heresy of the Collyridians who went evidently too far in the honors they paid to Mary.

But this was not a decisive blow. A few years later, a Roman monk, Jovinian, resumed the thesis of Helvidius. As soon as he heard of it, St. Jerome sent from Bethlehem another refutation, in which he merely defended virginity in general from the attacks directed against it, deeming that, as to Mary's virginity, he had exhausted the subject in his preceding treatise.†

St. Jerome has been charged with having in that controversy "disclosed all the depths of irony and bitter sarcasm with which his soul was filled, and with having replied to his opponent by unseemly jokes." * The author of this judgment, which is more than justly severe, forgets the character of the literary customs of those times, nor does he take into account the excuse made by St. Jerome himself at the end of his writing against Helvidius. "I have become rhetorical, and have disported myself a little like a platform orator. You compelled me, Helvidius; for, brightly as the Gospel shines at the present day, you will have it that equal glory attaches to virginity and to the marriage state." †

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* MIGNE, *P. L.*, xxiii, 183-206. Cf. GRÜTZMACHER, *Hieronymus,* i, p. 269.

† *Ibid.*, 211-388. W. Haller has gathered in one volume all the texts that refer to Jovinian. Cf. *Texte und Untersuchungen,* new series, ii, 3.

As Jovinian had recruited some followers in Northern Italy, St. Ambrose also wrote a refutation of his errors.‡ Moreover, soon they were officially condemned at Milan in an episcopal synod. Pope St. Siricius immediately sanctioned the sentence and put Jovinian, with eight of his partisans nominally under the ban of excommunication.§ The following year, the Council of Capua

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[*] Herzog, in the *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. relig.*, July-August, 1907; pp. 325, 331.

[†] *Adv. Helvid.*, 22.

[‡] *De Institut. Virg.*, written toward the year 392; the question of Mary's perpetual virginity is treated in chapters v-xv; Migne, *P. L.*, xvi, 313-328.

[§] Migne, *P. L.*, xvi, 1123; with the answer of the Synod of Milan to Pope Siricius. *Ibid.*, 1125.

dealt in the same way with Bonosus, bishop of Sardica in Illyricum, who had compromised himself by professing the same erroneous views. *

4. St. Jerome's treatise against Helvidius has remained the storehouse of information regarding Mary's perpetual virginity. The author resumes the arguments of Origen and of St. Epiphanius, and adds much that is his own. His opponents had thought they could shake the belief of the faithful with three or four texts of the Gospel. Jerome's exegetical learning and skill enable him to silence his adversaries in the name of the Gospel itself. The work is worth a close study: its mere analysis will show that, after all, little has since been added to its material.

(*a*) The view of Helvidius is a novelty, an impiety, a bold denial of the faith of the whole world.† "Might I not array against you the whole series of ancient writers: Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and many other apostolic and eloquent men, who against Ebion, Theodotus of Byzantium, and Valentinus, held these same views and wrote volumes replete with wisdom. If you had ever read what they wrote, you would be a wiser man."[*] St. Jerome has been blamed for appealing wrongly to the authors of the 2d century. True, the controversy in which the latter were engaged referred directly to Christ's Virgin-Birth, but the reasons they brought forward have really a more extensive bearing. Thus, for instance, they commonly call, without any hesitation, Mary *the Virgin:* an unqualified appellation that would hardly have become the mother of a family, even were she a most honorable woman.

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* *Epist. Siricii ad Anysium de causa Bonosi,* after the 56th letter of St. Ambrose, MIGNE, *P. L.*, xvi, 1172; cf. DENZINGER, *Enchiridion,* n. 1781 (new edit., n. 91).

† §§ 1-14, 17-19, 22.

At an early date, the faith in the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God was expressly embodied in the epithet, ἀειπάρθενος, *semper virgo.* This term is already found in that wording of the Apostles' Creed, which was proposed at Antioch to those who would apply for Baptism; it is also found in the exposition by St. Athanasius, of the formula of faith used at Alexandria.[†]

Of all the ecclesiastical writers of the first four centuries, only two could Helvidius quote in support of his view: Tertullian and Victorinus of Pettau (+about 303). St. Jerome gives up Tertullian as a heretic who has no more authority on this point than on many others. As to Victorinus, "like the Evangelists, he spoke of the *brethren of the Lord,* not of the *sons of Mary.*" * On the other hand, the defender of Mary's perpetual virginity might have appealed to the explicit testimony of Origen and St. Epiphanius. The former had already styled *heretics* those who, in his life, did not hold on this point the common sentiment of the faithful; the latter uses the terms *rashness, blasphemy,* unheard of *madness,* unbearable *novelty.*† A few years later St. Ambrose will charge with sacrilege the attempt made by Bonosus to gain credit for the views of Helvidius.‡

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[*] § 17.

[†] Καὶ γεννηθέντα ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς ἁγιας τῆς ἀειπαρθένου. DENZINGER, *Enchirid.*, 12; cf. 10, 142, 143 (new ed., nn. 12, 10, 201, 202).

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* "Et de Tertulliano quidem nihil amplius dico, quam Ecclesiæ hominem non fuisse. De Victorino vero id assero quod et de Evangelistis, fratres enin dixisse Domini, non filios Mariæ. Fratres autem eo sensu, quem superius exposuimus, propinquitate, non natura" (§ 17). As a matter of fact, all the passages of Tertullian that bear on the question are found in works which he composed after he had become a Montanist, or at least a semi-Montanist.

† ORIGEN, *Homil. vii in Lucam,* in med.; ST. EPIPHAN., *Adv. Hær.,* lxxviii, 1-7.

‡ *De Institut. Virginis,* V. 35.

(*b*) It is in the field of Gospel texts that Jerome displays against his opponents all the treasures of his learning and all the refined keenness of his mind.

We read in St. Matthew (1 [18]): *Cum esset desponsata mater ejus Maria Joseph, priusquam convenirent inventa est in utero habens de Spiritu Sancto.* What does this mean? Helvidius asked. Mary not only is *entrusted* to Joseph's care, she becomes really his spouse; and, had not the union been consummated later on, the Evangelist would not have said, *priusquam convenirent.* If we speak of some one who is not to take supper, we do not say that this or that event occurred before his supper. Besides, the same Evangelist speaks still more plainly a few verses below, when he adds: *Et non cognoscebat eam, donec peperit filium suum* (1 [25]); and this is emphasized by St. Luke's words (2 [7]): *Et peperit filium suum primogenitum.* * Texts like these, Helvidius affirmed, do away with any ambiguity, not only because of the definite meaning of the term *cognoscebat,* which here designates the conjugal act, but also because it can be no question of a first-born son except in a family in which there are at least two children.

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* The received text of St. Matthew 1 [25] reads τὸν πρωτότοκον, *primogenitum;* but that is an interpolation suggested by LUKE 2 [7]. St. Jerome, as well as Helvidius, had under his eyes an unadulterated text.

St. Jerome proves first to Helvidius that the latter has uttered just as many sophisms as words, unless he prefers to admit that he has confused everything. A young woman who is *entrusted* is not affianced, nor, if she is affianced, is she thereby a wife (although the Scriptures call her *uxor*): all this is beyond question; whilst it is equally certain that a wife becomes such, only through the consummation of the marriage.* Later on, St. Ambrose will add that a contract that is done according to rule, suffices to make a couple husband and wife.† The difficulty taken from the words of the Evangelists: *priusquam convenirent, donce peperit,*‡ St. Jerome answers by quoting many a Biblical passage in which *priusquam* and *donec* do not imply the subsequent occurrence of the thing which is said not to have as yet taken place at a particular time.§ Then, in order to state accurately the meaning of these expressions, he appeals to the every-day language; and it is in this connection that the polemic indulges in an application which to some delicate critics seems rather uncourteous. "If I choose to say: 'Helvidius, before he repented, was cut off by death,' must Helvidius repent after death?" * These words were a mere sally of wit, aimed at an opponent who had also made use of examples that were just as inconclusive. For, after all, if I say of some one that, before he sat down to supper, he was warned that there was poison in the food, I do not necessarily mean that, on that very same evening, he took his supper. The instances taken from Holy Writ were more appropriate, especially that of *Deuteronomy* 34[6]: *No man knoweth of his sepulchre* (Moses') *unto this day.* Would any one be bold enough to infer from that text that the tomb of Moses was found afterward or even that, in the writer's mind, it could ever be found, even after the researches of the Jews?

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* § 4.

† *De Institut. Virginis, vi.*

‡ The actual Latin Vulgate has *antequam convenirent,* which conveys the same meaning.

§ MATT. 28 ^{20}; *I Cor.* 15 $^{23-26}$; *Ps.* 122 ^{2}; *Gen.* 35 ^{4} (according to the LXX); *Deut.* 34 ^{6}.

Some have said that the instances chosen with the purpose to counterbalance the rather unpleasant impression made by St. Matthew's text 1 [25], were not exactly *ad rem.* True it is that, in those passages where the circumstances themselves show plainly enough that the case does not admit of any subsequent change, *donec* implies no idea of change. But it is quite otherwise, when on the contrary the circumstances invite us to look out for a change, after the term pointed out by *donec*. Did we read in the second book of *Kings,* 6[23], that "Michol, the daughter of Saul, had no child, until she left David and became the wife of Phaltiel" (instead of *usque in diem mortis suæ,*—as the text really has), we would rightly conclude that, after leaving David, Michol became a mother, because maternity is both the end and natural result of marriage.*

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* § 4.

"Still the argument, as applied to this particular case," C. Harris writes, "is not convincing. The Evangelist is not, even by implication, comparing together the connubial relations of Joseph and Mary before and after the birth of Jesus (as, in the case supposed, Michol's connubial relations with David and Phaltiel are compared), but simply affirming in the strongest possible way that Joseph had no share in the procreation of Jesus. Bengel's laconic comment is, therefore, upon the whole justified—*donec:* Non sequitur, ergo

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* HASTINGS' *Dict. of Christ,* Vol. I, p. 235.

post." The subsequent mention of the brethren of Jesus does not affect the question, because it was well known, when the Evangelist wrote, who the brethren were, and there was no need to guard against misconception."*

Moreover, St. Jerome grants to Helvidius that the term *cognoscebat* must be understood here of the conjugal act; he even upbraids him for losing his time in disproving senses of which nobody ever dreamt.†

The Gospel calls Jesus the *First born* of Mary. However, St. Jerome observes, whilst every only son is a first-born, not every first-born is an only son, although he may be so. For any to be called first-born, it is enough to have been brought forth the first, even though he has no younger brothers and sisters. This is why the Mosaic Law regarding the first-born ‡ found its application, as soon as the mother had given birth to a son, whether he was to be the only one or to be followed by several others. Is it not commonly said that a mother died when bringing forth her first-born? *

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* *Ibid.*

† St. Jerome either exaggerates or is mistaken. St. Epiphanius, *Adv. Hær.*, lxxviii, 17, and St. Hilary, *In Matt.* i, 3, understood that word of an act of purely intellectual knowledge. After Jesus' birth, St. Joseph *knew* Mary, *i. e.*, had a full knowledge of the mystery that had just taken place in her.

‡ *Exodus* 34 $^{19-20}$.

Helvidius asked why Joseph and Mary entered into a betrothal, if they did not intend to consummate the marriage. St. Jerome answers that the honor of Jesus and of His mother demanded that she should be looked upon as Joseph's legitimate wife. The veil of the Law was to conceal the mystery of God, until that mystery could be believed: then only was it to be revealed. Again, the Virgin-Mother needed a protector, and the Divine Child, a foster-father.†

(*c*) Even after those explanations, the fact remains that the text of the New Testament mentions several times the *fratres* of the Lord, and it was on that fact Helvidius especially dwelt.‡

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* § 9, 10.

† In his *Commentary on St. Matthew,* St. Jerome adds a third reason, that brought forward already by St. Ignatius, *Ephes.*, xix, and developed by Origen, *Homil.* vii *in Lucam,* namely that Mary's marriage had hid from the evil spirit the fact of her virginal childbirth, and consequently, too, the mystery of her Divine maternity. Of HERZOG, who, in *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. Relig.*, 1906, pp. 337-440, jeers quite clumsily at the ideas entertained by the ancients about Satan's psychology, we merely observe that in the most serious things he sees and takes in only the most insignificant aspects.

‡ § 11.

St. Jerome's lively wit had here full scope; nor did he miss his opportunity. Were his opponent better acquainted with Biblical topics, he would know that Holy Writ calls *fratres,* not only those who were born of the same father and mother, but also ordinary relatives, particularly nephews and cousins: hence let Helvidius learn that this appellation may rest on four different titles: nature, nationality, relationship and friendship.*

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* § 12-17, 14. Certain it is that in the Old Testament the word אח, translated ἀδελφός by the lxx, applies not only to brothers strictly so-called, and to half-brothers, *Genes.* 37[16]; but also to nephews, *Gen.* 13[8], 14[14]; to first cousins, *I Paral.* 23[21]; to more distant cousins, *Levit.* 10[4], to relatives in general, *IV Kings* 10[13]; and even to mere fellow-countrymen, *Gen.* 19[6]. Hence Renan, who cannot be charged with not knowing Hebrew, merely imposed on his readers, when he wrote: "The assertion that the word *aḥ* (brother, *frère*) has in Hebrew a broader meaning than in French is altogether false. The meaning of the word *ah* is absolutely the same as that of the word "frère." The fact that a word is used metaphorically or allusively or wrongly, proves nothing against its proper meaning." (*Life of Jesus,* 13th French edit., p. 25.) Never is the term "brothers" (*frères*) used in French to designate nephews and cousins, and yet this is done in Biblical texts. That extension of *aḥ* was due not to a metaphor, but to the significance which custom had imparted to that word. No one identified the "*fratres* of the Lord" with the Apostles, even though Jesus Himself called the latter "*fratres.*" St. Augustine appropriately remarks in this con-

It might have been objected to St. Jerome that this extensive meaning of the Aramaic word *aḥ* is not preserved in Greek by the word ἀδελφός; but he would have rightly answered that the Evangelists translated literally the Aramaic term and withdrew from it none of the various meanings it had in the language spoken by Jesus' contemporaries. This had already been done by the *LXX*.

Besides, in the same page where the Evangelists state that St. Joseph has nothing to do with the conception of Jesus, they call him His "father": why then can they not have given the name of "*fratres*" to those relatives of Jesus who were not children of His mother? *

(*d*) Hence the "brethren of the Lord" may have been, not His full brothers by the mother's side, but only His more or less distant relatives. It remains for us to examine whether we have some positive reasons for affirming that, in fact, they were not Mary's children.

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nection: "Quomodo loquitur sic intelligenda est. Habet linguam suam: quicumque hanc linguam nescit, turbatur et dicit: Unde fratres Domino? Num enim Maria iterum peperit? Absit . . . !" *In Joan.*, tract. x, cap. ii, 2.

* §16.

The ecclesiastical writers of old, and especially St. Jerome, have reduced to four chief headings the motives on which the traditional belief in Our Blessed Lady's perpetual virginity is grounded.

That virginity is implicitly affirmed in the narrative of the Annunciation. Mary asks the Angel: *How shall this be, since I know not man?* Which does not mean merely: As yet I have known no man; for, by itself, that circumstance was no sufficient obstacle to her becoming a mother, the more so that she was already betrothed, and that her betrothal itself entitled her to the hope of motherhood. The only explanation that fully accounts for those words is this: Mary had made up her mind to preserve her virginity, even in marriage, should circumstances ever lead her to embrace that state of life. That is the sentiment of most of the ancient writers who have commented on St. Luke's narrative of the Annunciation; and this view has been adopted also by the Scholastics, by modern Catholic interpreters and by a certain number of Protestant divines.*

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* St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Gregory of Nyssa; amongst modern scholars, SCHANZ, *Comment. über das Evang. des heil. Lukas,* p. 88, is one of those who have treated the subject best. On the Protestant side, Grotius, and nearer to us, C. HARRIS, in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels,* Vol. I, p. 235, may be quoted.

Again, if other children were born to Mary, why should Jesus, when about to die, have entrusted His mother to an outsider, to "the disciple whom He loved"? This consideration, which in the eyes of Lightfoot deals a conclusive blow to the opinion of Helvidius,* is simply scoffed at by Herzog, who writes as follows: "St. John's Gospel afforded them (the ancient Church writers) a valuable text. There it was said that, whilst hanging from the cross, the Savior had addressed the beloved disciple in these words, pointing out Mary to him: Behold, thy mother! and that He had added, pointing out the disciple to His mother: Behold, thy son! Christians thoroughly and thoughtfully sifted His words and found a mysterious meaning concealed under the surface." † Not at all: they had merely to take the letter of the words. The "mysterious meaning," a meaning most deeply "concealed under the surface," would be the one proposed by Loisy, when he claims that, in that scene of the fourth Gospel, the Mother of Jesus is simply the allegorical personage of converted Israel, the Judæo-Christian community, whilst the disciple is the type of the perfect believer, of the Johannic Christian, of the Greco-Christian Church! *

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* *Op. cit.*, p. 272.

† *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. Relig.*, 1907, p. 326. The ancient Church writers, so easily disposed of are St. Jerome, *Adv. Helvid.*, §13; St. Epiphanius, *Hæres.* lxxviii, 10; St. Chrysostom, *In Matt.*, v, 3; St. Hilary, *In Matt.*, i, 4; St. Ambrose, *De Velandis Virginibus*, 47, 48; Pope St. Siricius, *Epist. de Bonoso*, quoted above. That thought is already found in Origen, *In Joannem*, ii, 12, in *Catena Corderii*, p. 75.

I do not mean to say that the fact of Jesus entrusting His mother to St. John, taken by itself, proves conclusively that Mary had no other son, but I *do* say that this is a circumstance to be taken into account for the solution of the problem concerning the brethren of the Lord.

In the third place, unless Jesus was the only Son of His mother, why did His contemporaries, His countrymen of Nazareth, call Him so emphatically the *Son of Mary?* If the "brethren of the Lord" were the sons of His mother, how account for the fact that nowhere in the Gospels Mary is called their mother? †

True, the name of the Savior's mother is joined with the names of His brethren: ‡ but this admits of an easy explanation. After the death of St.

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* *Le Quatrième Evangile,* p. 879.

† § 15.

‡ MATT. 12 ^{47}; JOHN 2 ^{12}.

Joseph, and chiefly during the public life of Jesus, Mary probably dwelt under the same roof as her nearest relatives; that community of life may, perhaps, have started even some years before. As a matter of fact, several ancient ecclesiastical writers thought that the brethren of the Lord had been brought to the home of Mary, on account of their relationship with her husband, whatever its degree may have been.

How explain, but for the fact of Mary's perpetual virginity, that she has always been called *a Virgin?* As has been already remarked, that title dates back from the earliest Christian antiquity. If Mary had seven children, one of whom at least was bishop of Jerusalem (leaving aside several others who played important parts in that same Church), can we believe that Christians forgot, very quickly indeed, so notable a fact, and henceforth never ceased to see in her Jesus' Virgin-Mother?

Renan himself felt so strongly the objections against the view he had first embraced in his *Life of Jesus,* * that some ten years later, he decided to give it up: "Jesus," he writes, "had true (full) brothers and sisters. Only it is possible that these brothers and sisters were but half-brothers and half-sisters. Were these brothers and sisters likewise sons and daughters of Mary? This is improbable. In fact, the brothers appear to be much older than Jesus. Now Jesus was, as it would appear, the first-born of his mother. Jesus, moreover, was, in his youth, designated at Nazareth by the name of "Son of Mary." For this we have the most undoubted testimony of the Gospels. This assumes that he was known for a long time as the only son of a widow. In fact, such appellations were only employed when the father was dead, and when the widow had no other son. Let us instance the case of Piero della Francesca, the celebrated painter. In fine the myth of the virginity of Mary, without excluding absolutely the idea that Mary may have had afterward children by Joseph, or have been remarried, fits in better with the hypothesis that she had only one son." *

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* Pp. 67-69.

For, as a matter of fact, had the texts to be explained by the mythical interpretation, I would still prefer the "myth of Mary's virginity" to the myth of a *virgin,* mother of seven children and perhaps twice married!

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* *The Gospels,* p. 280.

Finally, those who in the Gospel are called "the *fratres* of the Lord" seem to have been older than Jesus. They are jealous of His popularity; * they criticise Him and give Him advice; † nay, on one occasion they endeavor to get hold of Him, under the pretext that He is out of His senses.‡ That attitude is hardly possible on the part of younger brothers, especially if we take into account the customs of the East. But if the *fratres* of the Lord are sons of Mary, they cannot be older than Jesus, since, according to St. Matthew and St. Luke, Mary was still a virgin when she conceived Him: Jesus was the First-born of His mother.

5. In that campaign which he undertook to defend Mary's perpetual virginity, St. Jerome had the approval and support of all the learned and distinguished men of the time: in the East, St. John Chrysostom,§ St. Cyril of Alexandria,‖ Theodoret,¶ Theophylactus,** leaving aside St.

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* MARK 6^{4}.

† JOHN 7^{1} *ff.*

‡ MARK 3^{21}.

§ *In Matt.*, hom. v, 3.

‖ *In Joan.*, vii, 5.

¶ *In Epist. ad Galat.*, i, in fine.

** *In Matt.*, xiii, 55; *in Epist. ad Galat.*, i, 19.

Epiphanius * and St. Basil † who had preceded; in the West, St. Ambrose,‡ St. Augustine,§ the Ambrosiaster || and Pelagius himself.¶

Then, the explicit definitions of Popes and Councils soon came to proclaim authoritatively that the opponent of Helvidius had defended the traditional faith. In his rescript to Anysius (391),

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* *Loc. cit.*

† This is an allusion to the writing entitled *Homilia in Sanct. Christi generationem* (MIGNE, *P. G.*, xxxii, 1468). Its authenticity has been called in question: according to Dom Garnier, it is not St. Basil's work; according to Bardenhewer, it has been interpolated. Differently from J. B. LIGHTFOOT, *op. cit.*, p. 284, we believe that Mary's perpetual virginity is here presented as an article necessary for the integrity of faith; what the author *does* say is that the contrary view would not do away with the faith in the mystery of the Incarnation.

‡ *Loc. cit.*

§ Haller has gathered in his *Jovinianus*, pp. 88-109, all the numerous texts of St. Augustine on this subject. We may quote merely what the holy Doctor wrote in the year 420 about the Pelagian Julian: "More illius Joviniani, qui aute paucos annos hæreticus novus virginitatem sanctæ Mariæ destruebat, et virginitati sacræ nuptias fidelium coæquabat." *Contra duas Epist. Pelag.*, i, 4.

|| *In Epist. ad Galat.*, printed generally at the end of the works of St. Ambrose, MIGNE, *P. L.*, xvii, 338.

¶ *In Epist. ad Galat.*, ii, 19; at the end of the works of St. Jerome, MIGNE, *P. L.*, xxx, 808.

Pope St. Siricius declares that Bonosus was rightly rebuked, and that his judges did well when rejecting and condemning his view. During the 7th century (649) the Council held by Martin I in the Lateran, puts under the ban any one who does not confess that "the ever virgin and spotless Mary . . . did not bring forth the Word of God, without any detriment for her virginity, which remained intact after her child-bearing." Nearer to us (1555), Paul IV solemnly affirmed against the Socinians that Mary's virginity *ante partum, in partu, post partum,* is a part of Catholic dogma.*

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Orthodox apologists have not only declared, in the name of tradition and of the texts, that the brethren of the Lord were not born of Mary: they have also attempted to define with precision the degree of their relationship with Jesus. As might be expected, they have not agreed on this latter point.

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* *Siricii Papae Epistola ad Anysium de perpetua Virginitate Mariæ,* (DENZINGER, *Enchir.,* n. 1781; new ed., n. 91); Concilii Lateran. sub Martino i, Can. 3 (DENZINGER, *Enchir.,* n. 204; new ed., n. 256); Pauli iv Constitutio *Cum quorumdam,* confirmata a Clemente viii (DENZINGER, *Enchir.,* n. 880; new ed., 993).

St. Epiphanius, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Cyril of Alexandria follow the view that had been made current by the apocryphal Gospels. The brethren of the Lord were St. Joseph's children by a former marriage.* Origen and after him St. Hilary had also accepted that view, though with hesitation.† That Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius and the Ambrosiater inclined to this opinion is probable, but not certain.‡ True, they say that, in the Gospel, some personages are called the brethren of the Lord because they were, or rather because they *were called* the sons of Joseph;

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* St. Epiph., *Adv. Hær.*, lxxxviii, 7; St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Christi Resur.*, orat. ii; St. Cyril of Alexand., *In Joan.*, vii, 5. Nay, St. Epiphanius adds a few more precise details not found in his predecessors. He knows that St. Joseph, the brother of Clopas, was son of Jacob surnamed Panther; that he had first married a woman of the tribe of Juda who gave him six children: four sons (James, Joseph, Simeon and Jude), and two daughters (Mary and Salome). Esther and Thamar or Martha are also mentioned by others in this connection.

† Cf. above, p. 274.

‡ Father Corluy, *op. cit.*, p. 15, grants that Eusebius favors the sentiment of St. Epiphanius.

this is the expression used by Eusebius in connection with James, the first bishop of Jerusalem.* With all respect due to Lightfoot, both the construction of the phrase and the wording of the context prompt us to believe that, for Eusebius, Jesus and James were brothers, because *both of them were called sons of Joseph.* It remains to inquire by what title they were sons of Joseph. We believe it more probable that in this case Eusebius depends on Hegesippus, whose writings he used so frequently. Now, as was said already, the latter sees in the Lord's brethren paternal cousins of Jesus.†

It can hardly be supposed that St. Jerome did not know how the tradition stood. He is so unconscious of having departed, in his dispute with Helvidius, from a well-grounded and generally accepted view that, twenty years later, he writes again: "*Some suppose* the Lord's brethren to be the sons of Joseph by a former wife, following the *ravings of the Apocryphals.*"‡ Personally he stands by what he has already written in his book *Adversus Helvidium.* The Lord's brethren are His cousins, born of that Mary whom the Gospel calls the mother of James the Less and of Joseph; she was the wife of Alpheus and the maternal aunt of Jesus, since she was the sister of the Blessed Virgin. She is also called by St. John Mary of Clopas (Cleophas among the Latins), because she was his daughter or perhaps merely his relative. However, in the eyes of St. Jerome this last point is secondary and hardly of any importance; hence he will not argue about it. What he claims against Helvidius, in the name of the texts, is that this Mary should not be identified with the mother of Jesus.* Above all, he

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* *H. E., II,* I: ὅτι δὴ καὶ οὗτος τοῦ Ἰωσὴφ ὠνόμαστο παῖς.

† Cf. above, pp. 266, and *ff.*

‡ *Comment. in Matt.*, xii, 49, 50; written in the year 398. From what has just been said, the reader may judge whether or not Herzog gives a fair account of the question when he writes: "In those words (which affirm St.

Joseph's virginity and represent the brethren of the Lord as maternal cousins of Jesus), St. Jerome departs from a tradition two centuries old. At the time he lived, the narrative of the Gospel of James had in the long run been received by all, except by a few who were still behind the age, like Helvidius; now Jerome sets aside that narrative which almost all held in respect, and represents as *cousins* of Christ, *i. e.,* as sons of Mary's sister—as he explains in his Commentary on St. Matthew—those who were called the brothers of Jesus in the Gospel text, and who, during the last two centuries, had been looked upon as His step-brothers." *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. Relig.,* July-August, 1907, p. 331.

* *Adv. Helvid.,* 13, 14. True, St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Christi Resurrectionem,* orat. ii (Migne, *P. G.,* xlvi, 648),

proclaims emphatically St. Joseph's virginity: "You say that Mary did not continue a virgin: I claim still more, that Joseph himself on account of Mary was a virgin, so that from a virgin wedlock a virgin son was born." *

This view St. Jerome does not ground on the authority of his predecessors, but on reasons of great fitness: reasons which are the more plausible that the texts of the Gospel, far from opposing it, can be much better understood in that hypothesis. It is only of the view concerning St. Joseph's virginity, but not of the view according to which the brethren of the Lord were cousins of Jesus that the statement of Baronius must be understood: *"Hujus (opinionis) fortissimus stipulator seu potius auctor Hieronymus."*†

St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine had favored first the view of St. Epiphanius, but they soon adopted that of St. Jerome.‡ They were followed

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makes that confusion, though in a very different sense: the Blessed Virgin is called Mary, mother of James and Joseph, because they had become her step-sons, through her marriage to St. Joseph, their father.

* *Adv. Helvidium,* 19.

† *Apparat. ad Annales,* xli.

‡ St. Chrysostom sides with St. Epiphanius, in his *Comment. in Matt.,* hom. v, 3; with St. Jerome, in his *Comment. in Epist. ad Galat.,* in fine. St. Augustine sides

a short while after by Theodoret and Theophylactus, among the Greeks; as to the Latins, they mention the hypothesis of a former marriage of St. Joseph, but only to declare it cannot be accepted.*

Moreover, it was not long before complementary explanations were added to St. Jerome's opinion. Not only James, the brother of the Lord, was identified with the Apostle James, son of Alpheus, but Alpheus himself was then identified with Clopas, so that the appellation "Mary, that of Clopas" must be translated by "Mary, wife of Alpheus." *Ἀλφαῖος* and *Κλωπᾶς* could be only two Greek transcriptions of the same Hebrew name חִלְפַּי. This hypothesis will be accepted for many years, though, in our day, the number of those who question its truth is on the increase.†

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with St. Epiphanius, in *Quæst. xvii in Matt.,* iii, 2; with St. Jerome, *In Joan.,* tract. x, cap. ii, n. 2; tract. xxxviii, 3; in his *Comm. in Epist. ad Galat.,* he combines both views.

* Theodoretus, *In Epist. ad Galat.,* i, towards the end; Theophylactus *In Matt.,* xiii, 55; *In Galat.,* i, 19, where he attempts to combine both views: James is the brother of Jesus, since he is the legal son of Joseph who, by complying with the law of the Levirate, had given children to his brother Clopas.

† That identification, which seems to be first found in St. Chrysostom, *In Epist. ad Galat.,* i, 19, and later on by

A few more identifications were made later. In the Apostolic College, side by side with James, another brother of the Lord took his rank:—Jude, the author of the Epistle, became the Apostle Thaddeus, called also Lebbeus. Nay, some authors have asked themselves whether Simon, or Simeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, was truly distinct from the Apostle Simon, called the Canaanæan or Zelotes, styled by St. Jerome *trinomius*. Those identifications, which are found in some way or other in all the Western liturgies, including the Roman liturgy, are unknown to the Orientals.* The Council of Trent itself identifies

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Theodoretus, *In Epist. ad Galat.*, i, 19, has been exposed and defended at length by Corluy, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-148. The objections that may be raised against it may be seen in Vigouroux' *Diction. de la Bible*, i, 419. Renan upheld successively the two opinions. "These two names appear to designate the same person." *Life of Jesus*, p. 68. "People have often identified the name of 'Αλφαῖος with that of Κλωπᾶς by means of חלפי. This is indeed a reconcilement which is altogether false." *The Gospels*, p. 283.

* The Greek, Syriac and Coptic *Ordines* distinguish James, the brother of the Lord, from James of Alpheus. The Greeks celebrate the feast of the Apostle, son of Alpheus, on October 9, and that of the Lord's brother on the 23d of the same month. It may be observed that in the oldest Roman martyrologies James, son of Alpheus, is mentioned on June 22; whilst as to James of Jerusalem, his ordination is commemorated on December 28 and his death on March 25.

in passing James, the author of the Catholic Epistle, with the brother of the Lord.* Joseph, then, would be the only one among the brethren of the Lord who would not have had the honor of being reckoned among the Twelve.

However, that view is far from being universal. Regarding the question whether or not some Apostles were recruited from the brethren of Jesus, critics are divided into two schools, whose respective arguments Corluy has carefully exposed and discussed. These two schools, he says, "may be called, one the *Patristic* school, the other the *exegetical* school. The former, relying chiefly on the authority of the Fathers, denies altogether to the cousins of Jesus the quality of Apostles: the latter thinks it can find in the Biblical texts sufficient indications to affirm, in spite of the contrary view of several of the holy Fathers, that two, and even perhaps three of the 'brethren' of Jesus belonged to the Apostolic College. There are found in both of these schools distinguished scholars. The former is represented chiefly by the Bollandists Henschenius, Stiltinck and Van Hecke; the latter includes, besides the illustrious critic Le Nain de Tillemont, most weighty interpreters like Patrizi, Toletus, Lucas of Bruges, Maldonatus, Beelen, Liagre, Adalbert Maier, Drach, Windischmann, Hengstenberg, and others." *

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* *Sess.* iv, decret. *Sacrosancta;* Sess. xiv, cap. i, *De Extrema Unct.* (DENZINGER, *Enchirid,* n. 786; new ed., n. 908).

On the other hand, St. Joseph's virginity, which had been upheld by St. Jerome, soon became commonly held in the Latin Church; so that during the 11th century St. Peter Damian could write that "this was the expression of the faith of the Church." † St. Thomas dismisses peremptorily as "false" the exegesis according to which the Lord's brethren are children of St. Joseph.‡

Petau is less positive: for him the doctrine of St. Joseph's virginity is only more probable.§ Now, that for the space of two centuries, the piety of the faithful has come to confirm that pious belief, the view of the learned theologian seems excessively timid and even unsatisfactory. Corluy goes then, much farther, when he writes: "The *Catholic mind* has definitely sided with the idea of the great interpreter (St. Jerome). It would, therefore, be rash to call in doubt the perpetual virginity of Mary's husband." *

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* Corluy, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

† "Ecclesiæ fides est, ut virgo fuerit et is qui simulatus est pater." *Opusc. xvii*, 3. Migne, *P. L.*, cxlv, 384.

‡ *Comment. in Epist. ad Galat.*, cap. i, lect. 5.

§ *De Incarnatione*, XIV, iii, 13; Vol. VII, p. 254.

CHAPTER III.

CRITICISM AND CONCLUSION.

(1) REGARDING the texts that refer to the brethren of the Lord, there is a *dogmatic tradition* of a negative character, bearing on the sense to be given to those texts. The exegesis, according to which these personages are the *brothers* of Jesus, born of the same mother, is incompatible with the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity. Hence it is in the name of the traditional faith that Christians have constantly opposed the view of the Antidicomarianites, of Helvidius, Bonosus and Jovinian.

On the other hand, the sentiment of Helvidius is not satisfactorily grounded on the texts nor on the merely *historical* tradition. True, it solves the difficulty raised by the expression *fratres* of the Lord; but it introduces into the texts improbabilities, inconsistencies which a correct exegesis cannot successfully explain away. It is precisely these arguments based on the Gospel narrative which St. Jerome brought forward in behalf of the opposite view and which have been looked upon as forcible by subsequent interpreters.

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* *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

As to the tradition of the first three centuries, it was so little favorable to the view of Helvidius that the latter dared appeal only to Tertullian and to Victorinus of Pettau; even the latter's opinion was doubtful, according to St. Jerome. Nay, the faith in Mary's perpetual virginity is emphatically proclaimed in the name of *Virgin* which the 2d century apologists ascribe antonomastically to Mary, and it becomes soon explicit in the appellation ἀειπάρθενος, found in the old formulas of faith.

It is easy to affirm that when growing and gradually gaining in intensity the religious sentiment went, by an irresistible law, beyond the primitive meaning of the texts; it is also easy to add that in the long run the Christian conscience became proof against the protest of history. This is a mere gratuitous assertion. Consciously or unconsciously it rests, partly at least, on the prejudice of a radical religious evolutionism. For most of those who now follow the exegesis of Helvidius, any belief in the supernatural must start from a natural fact, which faith has transfigured through a process of allegorical or mythical *sublimation.*

Then, on what grounds does the affirmation rest that the conscience of the early Christian generations lacked, as regards the primitive facts of Christianity, both intelligence and honesty? The study of the literature of that age, to begin with St. Paul's Epistles, contradicts that assertion most plainly. The reverence for the boundaries set by the primitive data of Christian doctrine is most clearly perceived in the long and painful struggle which orthodoxy had to bear against the Gnostic Docetæ. However attractive for Christian souls may have been the theory of a Christ who had been made in Heaven and who, like the manna of old, had come down upon earth, the Church remained firm in her belief in the Christ of the Gospels, whose life is so much encompassed with the weaknesses of our nature that human wisdom is, so to say, confounded and scandalized at the sight. With dispositions like these, the Christian conscience must have had strong reasons indeed to profess Christ's Virgin-Birth and His mother's perpetual virginity, the more so especially that the contrary seemed to be affirmed by some passages of the Gospels.

Some one has claimed that "the dogma of Christ's virginal conception demanded, as its natural and necessary complement, Mary's perpetual virginity, and that the latter followed up the former so closely that they must stand or fall together." * This is indeed a very free manner of writing the *history* of Christian doctrines. With a method like that, one can bring forward any explanation whatever of the actual *Creed;* but one can just as easily, even far more easily, show that, on these principles, that Creed should be quite different from what it is actually.

True, ancient ecclesiastical writers, particularly St. Epiphanius, likened the Virgin's womb to the new sepulchre where the body of Jesus was laid; they exposed at length how fitting it was that the door, which had been opened to the Divine King, should be closed to any one else. However, they do not exaggerate the bearing of those considerations which, whilst making the dogma more plausible, are not able by themselves to create it.

Some have also surmised that the belief in Mary's perpetual virginity probably began in the 2d or in the 3d century, just as we witness in the 4th century the rise of the belief in St. Joseph's virginity: a belief which was to be the doctrinal profit of the controversy of St. Jerome with Helvidius: to the conquests previously made a new conquest was added. The example just quoted will enable us to point out most plainly the great and ever-enduring difference there is between a dogma and a pious belief.

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* HERZOG, *Revue d'Hist. et de Littér. Relig.*, July-August, 1907, p. 320; cf., p. 327.

When Mary's perpetual virginity was denied, there arose a unanimous voice of protest, in the name of traditional faith, all over Christendom, in the East and in the West. The innovators were styled senseless, froward, wicked. Origen had already called them *heretics*. The dogma was chiefly insisted on, the explanation of the texts that might give rise to objections being left in the background. On several occasions the Church came forward and sanctioned by her definitions the protest of the Christian conscience. On the contrary, when St. Jerome speaks of St. Joseph's virginity, he carefully abstains from invoking tradition; he knows—and he confesses, too—that several ancient writers—and not of the least—had different views on the same subject.* It is in the name of the texts and for the purpose of satisfying the piety of the faithful, that he opposes his exegesis to the rash affirmation of those who look upon St. Joseph as the real father of the Lord's brethren.* St. Jerome's sentiment has become current in the Church, and some have rightly said that, owing to the action of the Holy Ghost that directs the piety of the faithful and Christian worship, it would be rash to call that sentiment in question, and scandalous to speak against it; but no theologian ever claimed it was a dogma, nor even a doctrine that was to be defined. This the judicious Tillemont had already observed at length, several centuries ago.†

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* According to the treatise *Adv. Helvidium*, 19, those who before him held an opinion contrary to his own, are the majority, *plerique*. But, as is well known, that word has not, under the pen of St. Jerome, a very definite sense. In the *De Viris illustr.*, 2, *plerique* becomes *nonnulli*, and in the *Comm. in Matt.*, xii, 49, *quidam*.

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* "Quod plerique non tam pia quam audaci temeritate confingunt." *Adv. Helvid.*, 19. How did St. Epiphanius fail to notice that, unless he gainsays the text of the Gospel, he must admit that, when St. Joseph was the *fiancé* or the husband of the Blessed Virgin, he had still that first wife whom the apocryphal Gospels assigned to him? For it is evident that the mother at least of two of the Lord's brethren, Mary of Clopas, is one of the holy women who accompanied Jesus.

† These are his words: "Cardinal Peter Damian goes even farther and says that it is the faith of the Church; which, of course, must be understood of that common belief. For that great man was too well-read not to know that it would overthrow the foundation of the Church, to decree and range among the articles of faith a point on

Did the increasing regard and veneration for virginity—of which monachism was in the 4th century the public and social expression—did that regard and veneration exercise a telling influence on the doctrines pertaining to the marriage of Mary and Joseph? It cannot be doubted that the sympathies or antipathies for monachism added a new fuel to the controversy on that subject. The followers of either view sought in the Bible for texts that might either extol or undervalue the state of virginity. Some found their interest in representing Mary as the type of the Christian wife, who differed from the honest mother of a family, merely by the honor of Divine maternity; the others were glad and proud to be able to place under the patronage of the "ever virgin" the practice of virginity, which was for them the ideal of Christian life. We grant that, under the sway of these contrary preoccupations, excesses took place even on the part of the Orthodox, that some texts were explained in a meaning which was not their real meaning. But it is

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which Holy Writ is silent; for several of the Fathers have taught against it and it is held by none of the ancient writers, except St. Jerome. It is to be observed also that St. Jerome maintained it in the heat of controversy, on very insufficient grounds, and not as the belief of his time." *Mémoires pour servir à l'Hist. Ecclés.*, 1693, Vol. I, p. 505.

manifest—and this we intended to show in our essay—that neither those influences, nor the so-called strain inflicted by Christian exegesis on the primitive sense of the texts of the Gospel, can fully account, from a strictly historical point of view, for the origin of the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity.

Besides, why wait until the 4th century for signs of the possible reaction of practice upon doctrine? Christ Himself and St. Paul after Him, early proclaimed the superiority of virginity over matrimony, and all know that in the Church there has always been an élite of men and women who have striven to put their lives in harmony with that Gospel ideal. Were the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity the spontaneous outcome of that esteem for continence, why is it that Tertullian, whose excessive encratism is a well-known fact, was actually the ancestor of Helvidius? Again, why is it that the ascetic spirit and tendencies of St. Epiphanius, which were at least as strong as those of St. Jerome, did not suggest to him the idea of St. Joseph's virginity? These and many other questions on similar subjects cannot be satisfactorily answered. Hence it is much better to abide by the facts and the texts than to make one's thoughts subservient to a preconceived theory.

(2) What is the exact degree of relationship for which James, Joseph, Simon and Jude have been called the "brethren of the Lord"? On this point there is no strictly *dogmatic* tradition and statement; the *historical* tradition itself is neither uniform nor constant. The view of St. Jerome, who looks upon them as the cousins of Jesus, has long supplanted the view of St. Epiphanius; but that success does not suffice to make the point altogether certain. Besides, in the course of ages, his exegesis has undergone many a modification.

Instead of maternal cousins, nowadays paternal cousins are more currently spoken of. Those relatives of Jesus are divided into two groups: a division which seems to be allowed by the text of the Gospels. In some passages the brethren of the Lord are merely four in number, but in other passages, when their mother is mentioned, only two are reckoned: James and Joseph.* Does not this sufficiently show that not all were related to Jesus in the same degree?

Hence some scholars, whose number is daily increasing, hold that Joseph (the husband of the Blessed Virgin) had a brother, Clopas, and a sister, Mary, wife of Alpheus.† Of course, this view rejects the identification of Clopas with Alpheus. Simeon and Jude are sons of Clopas: James and Joseph, sons of Mary.* That grouping is suggested by the testimony of Hegesippus, and, moreover, agrees with the texts of the New Testament more fully than any other explanation.

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* MATT. 27^{56}.

† In that hypothesis, Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ is translated *Mary, sister of Clopas,* and Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Ἰακώβου, *Mary, mother of James.*

As to the subsequent identifications, they are still more doubtful. Are James and Jude, brethren of the Lord, to be identified with the Apostles St. James the Less and St. Jude? The question is open. Even we must confess that the affirmative answer squares most unsatisfactorily with the texts of the Gospel, which present the Lord's brethren as not believing His mission.* True, the answer is given that the Evangelist intends to speak only of a relative unbelief: or, again, that those incredulous brethren are to be sought outside the group of the four brethren, mentioned in the Gospel.* These explanations are not absurd: it remains to know whether or not they can be received, taking the wording of the texts as it is.

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* For a detailed justification of that view, cf. Calmes, *Evangile selon S. Jean,* p. 175. According to Baronius, *Appar. ad Annal.,* lxi-lxvi, pp. 457-459, Mary, wife of Alpheus, sister of Clopas and St. Joseph, remains distinct from the other Mary, wife of Clopas. On the other hand, the latter was cousin (ἀδελφή) of the Blessed Virgin; so that Simeon and Jude are cousins of the Lord for two reasons.—Others have attempted to combine the views of modern scholars with that of St. Jerome: Joseph and Clopas, two brothers, had married two sisters who had the same name, the Virgin Mary, and Mary, wife of Clopas.

* John 7^{5}; Mark 3^{21}.

The hypothesis of the identity agrees hardly better with the book of the *Acts* (1 ^{14}), in which the brethren of the Lord make up a group, distinct from that of the Apostles.† As to the text of the Epistle to the Galatians (1 ^{19}), *ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδεν εἰ μή Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου*, all scholars grant that it can be interpreted in a meaning favorable to either view. The decisive words *εἰ μή* do not necessarily imply that St. Paul saw, besides St. Peter, some other Apostle; that particle may just as well convey an exclusive meaning: I saw no other Apostle, nobody at all, except James, the brother of the Lord.‡

It is an unquestionable fact that some apologists take up too easily the hypothesis of the identity, anxious as they are to find in it a final solution of the difficulty raised by the "brethren of the Lord." If James, the son of Mary, "that of Clopas," is to be identified with the Apostle James, son of Alpheus, evidently he was not born of Mary, the mother of Jesus. But this is an *"a priori"* and biased consideration, which must be excluded from the debate. Mary's perpetual virginity and the precise character of the relationship which united Jesus to those whom the Gospel calls His *"fratres,"* are and must remain two distinct questions.*

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* Cf. CALMES, *op. cit.*, in Joan., 7 ^{5}; CORLUY, *op. cit.*, p. 148; CORNELY, *Introd. in Libros N. T.*, iii, p. 596.

† Cf. *I Cor.*, 9 ^{5}.

‡ Cf. CORLUY, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

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* Cf. CORNELY, *Comment. in Epist. ad Gal.*, p. 412, n. 1.

[THE END.]

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Childhood of Jesus Christ.

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